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ESSAYS  
ANCIENT AND MODERN

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## FRANCIS BACON

(1561—1626)

### Of Great Place

MEN in great place are thrice servants : servants of the sovereign or state ; servants of fame ; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom ; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty : or to seek power over others and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious ; and by pains men come to greater pains ; and it is sometimes base ; and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere* : [When you are no longer what you have been, there is no reason for wishing to live.] Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it were reason ; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness, which require the shadow ; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy ; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it ; but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy as it were by report ; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first that find their own griefs, though they be the last that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. *Ille mors gravis incubat, cui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi* : [Death falls heavy upon him who dies too well known to others, but unknown to himself.] In



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place there is licence to do good and evil ; whereof the latter is a curse ; for in evil the best condition is not to will ; the second not to can. But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act ; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works is the end of man's motion ; and conscience of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quae fecerunt manus suae, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis :* [and God turned to behold the works which His hands had made, and saw that they were all very good ;] and then the Sabbath. In the discharge of thy place set before thee the best examples ; for imitation is a globe of precepts. And after a time set before thee thine own example ; and examine thyself strictly whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples of those that have carried themselves ill in the same place ; not to set of thyself by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery or scandal of former times and persons ; but yet set it down to thyself as well to create good precedents as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerated ; but yet ask counsel of both times ; of the ancient time, what is best ; and of the latter time, what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know before hand what they may expect ; but be not too positive and peremptory ; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place but stir not questions of jurisdiction ; and rather assume thy right in silence and *de facto*, than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places ; and think it more honour to direct it chief than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place ; and do not drive away such as bring thee information, as

meddlers ; but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four ; delays, corruption, roughness, and facility. For delays ; give easy access ; keep times appointed ; go through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business but of necessity. For corruption ; do not only bind thine own hands or thy servants' hands in taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering. For integrity used doth the one ; but integrity confessed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change ; and do not think to steal it. A servant or a favourite ; if he be inward, and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought but a by-way to close corruption. For roughness ; it is a needless cause of discontent : severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility ; it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then ; but if importunity or little respects lead a man, he shall never be without. As Solomon saith, *To respect persons is not good ; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.* It is most true that was anciently spoken. *A place sheweth the man.* And it sheweth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii ; nisi imperet.* [if he had never been emperor, all would have pronounced him fit for empire,] saith Tacitus of Galba ; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus melius :* [Vespasian was the one emperor whom possession of power improved ;] though the one was wanting of sufficiency, the other of manners and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, when honour amends. For honour is, or should be, the place of virtue ; and as in nature things move violently to their place and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and

calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair ; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor fairly and tenderly ; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them when they look not for it, than exclude them when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation and private answers to suitors ; but let it rather be said, *When he sits in place he is another man.*

—FRANCIS BACON : *Essays.*

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### Of Delays

FORTUNE is like the market ; where many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall. And again, it is sometimes like Sibylla's offer ; which at first offereth the commodity at full, then consumeth part and part, and still holdeth up the price. For occasion (as it is in the common verse) *turneth a bold noddle, after she hath presented her locks in front, and no hold taken* ; or at least turneth the handle of the bottle first to be received and after the belly, which is hard to clasp. There is surely no greater wisdom than well to time the beginnings and onsets of things. Dangers are no more light, if they once seem light ; and more dangers have deceived men than forced them. Nay, it were better to meet some dangers half way, though they come nothing near, than to keep too long a watch upon their approaches ; for if a man watch too long, it is odds he will fall asleep. On the other side, to be deceived with too long shadows (as some have been when the moon was low and shone on their enemies' back), and so to shoot off before the time ; or to teach dangers to come on, by over-early buckling towards them ; is another extreme. The ripeness or

unripeness of the occasion (as we said) must ever be well-weighed, and generally it is good to commit the beginnings of all great actions to Argus with his hundred eyes, and the ends to Briareus with his hundred hands ; first to watch, and then to speed. For the helmet of Pluto, which maketh the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the counsel and celerity in the execution. For when things are once come to the execution, there is no secrecy comparable to celerity ; like the motion of a bullet in the air, which flieth so swift as it outruns the eye.

—FRANCIS BACON : *Essays*.

## JOHN EARLE

(1601 ?—1665)

### A Young Man

He is now out of nature's protection, though not yet able to guide himself ; but left loose to the world and fortune, from which the weakness of his childhood preserved him ; and now his strength exposes him. He is, indeed, just of age to be miserable, yet in his own conceit first begins to be happy ; and he is happier in this imagination, and his misery not felt is less. He sees yet but the outside of the world and men, and conceives them, according to their appearing, glisten, and out of this ignorance believes them. He pursues all vanities for happiness, and enjoys them best in this fancy. His reason serves not to curb but understand his appetite, and prosecute the motions thereof with a more eager earnestness. Himself is his own temptation, and needs not Satan, and the world will come hereafter. He leaves repentance for gray hairs, and performs it in being covetous. He is mingled with the vices of the age as the fashion and custom, with which he longs to be acquainted, and sins to better his understanding. He conceives his youth as the season of his lust, and the hour wherein he ought to be bad ; and because he would not lose his time, spends it. He distastes religion as a sad thing, and is six years elder for a thought of heaven. He scorns and fears, and yet hopes for old age, but dare not imagine it with wrinkles. He loves and hates with the same inflammation, and when the heat is over is cool alike to friends and enemies. His friendship is seldom so steadfast but that lust, drink, or anger may overturn it. He offers you his blood today in kindness, and is ready to take yours tomorrow. He does seldom anything which he wishes not to do again, and is only wise after a misfortune. He suffers much for his

knowledge, and a great deal of folly it is makes him a wise man. He is free from many vices, by being not grown to the performance, and is only more virtuous out of weakness. Every action is his danger, and every man his ambush. He is a ship without pilot or tackling, and only good fortune may steer him. If he scape this age, he has scaped a tempest, and may live to be a man.

—JOHN EARLE : *Microcosmographic*.

### A Plodding Student

Is a kind of alchemist or persecutor of nature, that would change the dull lead of his brain into finer metal, with success many times as unprosperous, or at least not quitting the cost, to wit, of his own oil and candles. He has a strange forced appetite to learning, and to achieve it brings nothing but patience and a body. His study is not great but continual, and consists much in the sitting up till after midnight in a rug-gown and a night-cap, to the vanquishing perhaps of some six lines ; yet what he has, he has perfect, for he reads it so long to understand it till he gets it without book. He may with much industry make a breach into logic, and arrive at some ability in an argument ; but for politer studies he dare not skirmish with them, and for poetry accounts it impregnable. His invention is no more than the finding out of his papers, and his few gleanings there ; and his disposition of them is as just as the bookbinder's, a setting or gluing of them together. He is a great discomforter of young students, by telling them what travail it has cost him, and how often his brain turned at philosophy, and makes others fear studying as a cause of duncery. He is a man much given to apothegms, which serve him for wit, and seldom breaks any jest but which belonged to some Lacedaemonian or Roman in Lycosthenes. He is like a dull carrier's horse, that will go a whole week together, but never out of a foot-pace ; and he that sets forth on the Saturday shall overtake him.

—JOHN EARLE : *Microcosmographic*.



## A Pretender to Learning

Is ONE that would make all others more fools than himself, for though he know nothing, he would not have the world know so much. He conceits nothing in learning but the opinion, which he seeks to purchase without it, though he might with less labour cure his ignorance than hide it. He is indeed a kind of scholar mountebank, and his art our delusion. He is tricked out in all the accoutrements of learning, and at the first encounter none passes better. He is oftener in his study than at his book, and you cannot please him better than to deprehend him : yet he hears you not till the third knock, and then comes out very angry, as interrupted. You find him in his slippers and a pen in his ear, in which formality he was asleep. His table is spread wide with some classic folio, which is as constant to it as the carpet, and hath laid open in the same page this half-year. His candle is always a longer sitter-up than himself, and the boast of his window at midnight. He walks much alone in the posture of meditation, and has a book still before his face in the fields. His pocket is seldom without a Greek Testament or Hebrew Bible, which he opens only in the church, and that when some stander-by looks over. He has sentences for company, some scatterings of Seneca and Tacitus, which are good upon all occasions. If he read anything in the morning, it comes up all at dinner ; and as long as that lasts, the discourse is his. He is a great plagiary of tavern wit, and comes to sermons only that he may talk of Austin. His parcels are the mere scrapings from company, yet he complains at parting what time he has lost. He is wondrously capricious to seem a judgment, and listens with a sour attention to what he understands not. He talks much of Scaliger, and Casaubon, and the Jesuits, and prefers some unheard of Dutch names before them all. He has verses to bring in upon these and these hints, and it shall go hard but he will wind in his opportunity. He is critical in a language he cannot construe, and speaks seldom under Arminius in divinity. His business and

retirement and caller-away is his study, and he protests no delight to it comparable. He is a great nomenclator of authors, which he has read in general in the catalogue and in particular, in the title, and goes seldom so far as the dedication. He never talks of anything but learning, and learns all from talking. Three encounters with the same men pump him, and then he only puts in or gravely says nothing. He has taken pains to be an ass, though not to be a scholar, and is at length discovered and laughed at.

—JOHN EARLE : *Microcosmogra, hic.*

JOSEPH ADDISON

(1672—1719)

The Exercise of the Fan

—*Lusus animo debent aliquando dari,*

*Al cogitandum melior ut redeat sibi.*—PRAEDR.

I do not know whether to call the following letter a satire upon coquettes or a representation of their several fantastical accomplishments, or what other title to give it ; but as it is I shall communicate it to the public. It will sufficiently explain its own intentions, so that I shall give it my reader at length, without either preface or postscript.

“MR. SPECTATOR—Women are armed with fans as men with swords, and sometimes do more execution with them. To the end therefore that ladies may be entire mistresses of the weapon which they bear, I have erected an Academy for the training up of young women in the Exercise of the Fan, according to the most fashionable airs and motions that are now practised at court. The ladies who carry fans under me are drawn up twice a day in my great hall, where they are instructed in the use of their arms, and exercised by the following words of command ;

*Handle your Fans,  
Unfurl your Fans,  
Discharge your Fans,  
Ground your Fans,  
Recover your fans,  
Flutter your Fans.*

By the right observation of these few plain words of command, a woman of a tolerable genius, who will apply herself diligently to her exercise for the space of

but one half-year, shall be able to give her fan all the graces that can possibly enter into that little modish machine.

"But to the end that my readers may form to themselves a right notion of the exercise I beg leave to explain it to them in all its parts. When my female regiment is drawn up in array, with every one her weapon in her hand, upon my giving the word to *hundle their fans*, each of them shakes her fan at me with a smile, then gives her right-hand woman a tap upon the shoulder, then presses her lips with the extremity of her fan, then lets her arms fall in an easy motion, and stands in readiness to receive the next word of command. All this is done with a close fan, and is generally learned in the first week.

"The next motion is that of *unfurling the fan*, in which are comprehended several little flirts and vibrations, as also gradual and deliberate openings, with many voluntary fallings asunder in the fan itself, that are seldom learned under a month's practice. This part of the exercise pleases the spectators more than any other, as it discovers on a sudden an infinite number of Cupids, garlands, altars, birds, beasts, rainbows, and the like agreeable figures, that display themselves to view, whilst every one in the regiment holds a picture in her hand.

"Upon my giving the word to *discharge their fans*, they give one general crack that may be heard at a considerable distance when the wind sits fair. This is one of the most difficult parts of the exercise; but I have several ladies with me, who at their first entrance could not give a pop loud enough to be heard at the further end of a room, who can now *discharge a fan* in such a manner, that it shall make a report like a pocket-pistol. I have likewise taken care (in order to hinder young women from letting off their fans in wrong places or unsuitable occasions) to show upon what subject the crack of a fan may come in properly: I have likewise invented a fan with which a girl of sixteen, by the help

of a little wind which is enclosed about one of the largest sticks, can make as loud a crack as a woman of fifty with an ordinary fan.

"When the fans are thus *discharged*, the word of command in course is to *ground their fans*. This teaches a lady to quit her fan gracefully when she throws it aside, in order to take up a pack of cards, adjust a curl of hair, replace a falling pin, or apply herself to any other matter of importance. This part of the exercise, as it only consists in tossing a fan with an air upon a long table (which stands by for that purpose), may be learned in two days' time as well as in a twelve-month.

"When my female regiment is thus disarmed, I generally let them walk about the room for some time; when on a sudden (like ladies that look upon their watches after a long visit) they all of them hasten to their arms, catch them up in a hurry, and place themselves in their proper stations upon my calling out *Recover your fans*. This part of the exercise is not difficult, provided a woman applies her thoughts to it.

"The *fluttering of the fan* is the last, and indeed the masterpiece of the whole exercise; but if a lady does not mispend her time, she may make herself mistress of it in three months. I generally lay aside the dog days and the hot time of the summer for the teaching of this part of the exercise; for as soon as ever I pronounce *Flutter your fans*, the place is filled with so many zephyrs and gentle breezes as are very refreshing in that season of the year, though they might be dangerous to ladies of a tender constitution in any other.

"There is an infinite variety of motions to be made use of in the *flutter of a fan*: there is the angry flutter, the modest flutter, the timorous flutter, the confused flutter, the merry flutter, and the amorous flutter. Not to be tedious there is scarce any emotion in the mind which does not produce a suitable agitation in the fan: insomuch, that if I only see the fan of a disciplined lady, I know very well whether she laughs, frowns, or blushes. I have seen a fan so very angry, that it would have been

dangerous for the absent lover who provoked it to have come within the wind of it ; and at other times so very languishing, that I have been glad for the lady's sake the lover was at a sufficient distance from it. I need not add that a fan is either a prude or coquette, according to the nature of the person who bears it. To conclude my letter, I must acquaint you that I have from my own observations compiled a little treatise for the use of my scholars, entitl'd *The Passions of the Fan* ; which I will communicate to you, if you think it may be of use to the public. I shall have a general review on Thursday next ; to which you shall be very welcome if you will honour it with your presence.—I am, etc."

"P. S.—I teach young gentlemen the whole art of gallanting a fan.

"N. B.—I have several little plain fans made for this use, to avoid expense."

—JOSEPH ADDISON : *The Spectator*. No. 102.  
June 27, 1711.

## CHARLES LAMB

(1775—1834)

### Dream Children ; A Reverie

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children ; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk, (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived), which had been the scene (so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country) of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Red-breasts ; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining country ; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the <sup>own</sup> other house, where they were set up, and

looked as awkward as if someone were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman ; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field, once was ; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer, (here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted), the best dancer, I was saying, in the country, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain ; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house ; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said, " those innocents would do her no harm " . and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she ; and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them ; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry and carved oaken panels, with



the gilding almost rubbed out ; sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me ; and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit unless now and then ; and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings, I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines oranges and such-like common baits for children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us ; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the country in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out ; (and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries) ; and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great grand-mother Field most especially ; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a

lame-footed boy, (for he was a good bit older than I), many a mile when I could not walk for pain ; and how in afterlife he became lame-footed too, and I did not always, I fear, make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed ; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death ; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me ; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him, (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb.—Here the children fell acrying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n ; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was ; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech : “We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The

children of Alice call Bartium father. We are nothing ; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side ; but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

—CHARLES LAMB : *Essays of Elia*.

### Poor Relations

A poor relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature,—a piece of impertinent correspondency,—an odious approximation,—a haunting conscience,—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of our prosperity,—an unwelcome remembrancer,—a perpetually recurring mortification,—a drain on your purse,—a more intolerable dun upon your pride,—a drawback upon success,—a rebuke to your rising,—a stain in your blood,—a blot on your scutcheon,—a rent in your garment,—a death's head at your banquet,—Agathocles' pot,—a Mordecai in your gate,—a Lazarus at your door,—a lion in your path,—a frog in your chamber,—a fly in your ointment,—a mote in your eye,—a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends,—the one thing not needful,—the hail in harvest,—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr.—." A rap, between familiarity and respect ; that demands, and, at the same time, seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and—embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and—draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner-time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side table. He never cometh

upon open days, when your wife says with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr.—will drop in to-day." He remembereth birthdays—and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small—yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port—yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Everyone speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be—a tide waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity he might pass for a casual dependent; with more boldness he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent—yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanour, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and—resents being left out. When the company break up he proffereth to go for a coach—and lets the servants go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of—the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations to institute what he calleth—favourable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will inquire the price of your furniture: and insults you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape, but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle—which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum

yet; and did not know, till lately, that such-and-such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner, as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is—a female Poor Relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a Character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L—s; or what does she at their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble, and ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be repressed sometimes *aliquando sufflammandus erat*—but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped—after the gentlemen. Mr.—requests the honour of taking wine with her; she hesitates between Port and Madeira, and chooses the former—because he does. She calls the servant *Sir*; and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The house-keeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her, when she has mistaken the piano for harpsichord.

Richard Amlet Esq., in the play, is a noticeable instance of the disadvantages to which this chimerical notion of *affinity constituting a claim to an acquaintance*, may subject the spirit of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is betwixt him and a lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman, who persists in calling him

"her son Dick." But she has wherewithal in the end to recompense his indignities, and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it had been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W——was of my own standing at Christ's, a fine classic, and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart, and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing on that respect, which he would have everyone else equally maintain for himself. He would have you think alike with him, on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W——want, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion to the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must have walked erect; and in which Hooker, in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depths of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of his library, and seldom cared for looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him, to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man; when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with

a second and worse malignity. The father of W— had hitherto exercised the humble profession of house-painter at N—, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the youngman, the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits for ever. To a person unacquainted with our Universities, the distance between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as they are called—the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W—'s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown—insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W— must change the air of Oxford or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who stains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W—, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High Street to the back of...college, where W— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful, and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evange'ist, which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity, or badge of gratitude to his saint. W— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, "knew his mounted sign—and fled." A letter on his father's table the next morning, announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark

for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful ; but this theme of poor relationship is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter, are certainly not attended with anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling. At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity ; his words few or none ; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so—for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been school-fellows a world ago at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning : a captive—a stately being, let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual general respect which we all in common manifested towards him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument, touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hills, and in the valley. This marked distinction



formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain ; a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer ; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred : even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Minster : in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plain-born, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remembered with anguish the thought that came over me : “Perhaps he will never come here again”. He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigour, when my aunt—an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season—uttered the following memorable application—“Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day.” The old gentleman said nothing at the time—but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it—“Woman, you are superannuated”. John Billet did not survive long, after the digesting of this affront : but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substi-

tuted in place of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held, what he accounted, a comfortable independence : and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escritoire after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

—CHARLES LAMB : *Last Essays of Elia*.

# WILLIAM HAZLITT

(1778—1830)

## On the Love of the Country

*To the Editor of the Round Table*

SIR,

I do not know that anyone has ever explained satisfactorily the true source of our attachment to natural objects, or of that soothing emotion which the sight of the country hardly ever fails to infuse into the mind. Some persons have ascribed this feeling to the natural beauty of the objects themselves, others to the freedom from care, the silence and tranquillity which scenes of retirement afford—others to the healthy and innocent employments of a country life—others to the simplicity of country manners—and others to different causes; but none to the right one. All these causes may, I believe, have a share in producing this feeling; but there is another more general principle, which has been left untouched, and which I shall here explain, endeavouring to be as little sentimental as the subject will admit.

Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, (the most valuable of all his works), relates, that, when he took possession of his room at Annecy, at the house of his beloved mistress and friend, he found that he could see "a little spot of green" from his window, which endeared his situation the more to him, because, he says, it was the first time he had had this object constantly before him since he left Boissy, the place where he was at school when a child. Some such feeling as that here described will be found lurking at the bottom of all our attachments of this sort. Were it not for the recollections habitually associated with them, natural objects could not interest the mind in the manner they do. No doubt, the sky is beautiful; the clouds sail majestically along its bosom; the sun is cheering; there is something exquisitely graceful in the manner in which a plant or tree puts forth

its branches ; the motion with which they bend and tremble in the evening breeze is soft and lovely ; there is music in the babbling of a brook ; the view from the top of a mountain is full of grandeur ; nor can we behold the ocean with indifference. Or, as the Minstrel sweetly sings—

"Oh how can'st thou renounce the boundless store  
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields !  
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,  
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields ;  
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,  
And all that echoes to the song of even,  
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,  
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,  
Oh, how can'st thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven !"

It is not, however, the beautiful and magnificent alone that we admire in Nature ; the most insignificant and rudest objects are often found connected with the strongest emotions ; we become attached to the most common and familiar images as to the face of a friend whom we have long known, and from whom we have received many benefits. It is because natural objects have been associated with the sports of our childhood, with air and exercise, with our feelings in solitude, when the mind takes the strongest hold of things, and clings with the fondest interest to whatever strikes its attention ; with change of place, the pursuit of new scenes, and thoughts of distant friends ; it is because they have surrounded us in almost all situations, in joy and in sorrow, in pleasure and in pain ; because they have been one chief source and nourishment of our feelings, and a part of our being, that we love them as we do ourselves.

There is, generally speaking, the same foundation for our love of Nature as for all our habitual attachments, namely, association of ideas. But this is not all. That which distinguishes this attachment from others is the transferable nature of our feelings with respect to physical objects ; the associations connected with any one object extending to the whole class. My having been attached to any particular person does not make me

feel the same attachment to the next person I may chance to meet ; but, if I have once associated strong feelings of delight with the objects of natural scenery, the tie becomes indissoluble, and I shall ever after feel the same attachment to other objects of the same sort. I remember when I was abroad, the trees, and grass, and wet leaves, rustling in the walks of the Thuilleries, seemed to be as much English, to be as much the same trees and grass, that I had always been used to, as the sun shining over my head was the same sun which I saw in England ; the faces only were foreign to me. Whence comes this difference ? It arises from our always imperceptibly connecting the idea of the individual with man, and only the idea of the class with natural objects. In the one case, the external appearance or physical structure is the least thing to be attended to ; in the other, it is everything. The springs that move the human form, and make it friendly or adverse to me, lie hid within it. There is an infinity of motives, passions, and ideas, contained in that narrow compass, of which I know nothing, and in which I have no share. Each individual is a world to himself, governed by a thousand contradictory and wayward impulses. I can, therefore, make no inference from one individual to another ; nor can my habitual sentiments, with respect to any individual, extend beyond himself to others. But it is otherwise with respect to Nature. There is neither hypocrisy, caprice, nor mental reservation in her favours. Our intercourse with her is not liable to accident or change, interruption or disappointment. She smiles on us still the same. Thus, to give an obvious instance, if I have once enjoyed the cool shade of a tree, and been lulled into a deep repose by the sound of a brook running at its feet, I am sure that wherever I can find a tree and a brook, I can enjoy the same pleasure again. Hence, when I imagine these objects, I can easily form a mystic personification of the friendly power that inhabits them, Dryad or Naiad, offering its cool fountain or its tempting shade. Hence the origin of the Grecian mythology. All objects of the same kind being the same, not only

in their appearance, but in their practical uses, we habitually confound them together under the same general idea; and, whatever fondness we may have conceived for one, is immediately placed to the common account. The most opposite kinds and remote trains of feeling gradually go to enrich the same sentiment; and in our love of Nature, there is all the force of individual attachment, combined with the most airy abstraction. It is this circumstance which gives that refinement, expansion, and wild interest to feelings of this sort, when strongly excited, which everyone must have experienced who is a true lover of Nature. The sight of the setting sun does not affect me so much from the beauty of the object itself, from the glory kindled through the glowing skies, the rich broken columns of light, or the dying streaks of day, as that it indistinctly recalls to me numberless thoughts and feelings with which, through many a year and season, I have watched his bright descent in the warm summer evenings, or beheld him struggling to cast a "farewell sweet" through the thick clouds of winter. I love to see the trees first covered with leaves in the spring, the primroses peeping out from some sheltered bank, and the innocent lambs running races on the soft green turf; because, at that birth-time of Nature, I have always felt sweet hopes and happy wishes—which have not been fulfilled! The dry reeds rustling on the side of a stream,—the woods swept by the loud blast,—the dark massy foliage of autumn,—the grey trunks and naked branches of the trees in winter,—the sequestered copse and wide extended heath,—the warm sunny showers, and December snows,—have all charms for me; there is no object, however trifling or rude, that has not, in some mood or other, found the way to my heart; and I might say, in the words of the poet,

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Thus Nature is a kind of universal home, and every object it presents to us an old acquaintance with unaltered looks,

———"Nature did ne'er betray  
 The heart that lov'd her, but through all the years  
 Of this our life, it is her privilege  
 To lead from joy to joy."

For there is that consent and mutual harmony among all her works, one undivided spirit pervading them throughout, that, if we have once knit ourselves in hearty fellowship to any of them, they will never afterwards appear as strangers to us, but, whichever way we turn, we shall find a secret power to have gone out before us, moulding them into such shapes as fancy loves, informing them with life and sympathy, bidding them put on their festive looks and gayest attire at our approach, and to pour all their sweets and choicest treasures at our feet. For him, then, who has well acquainted himself with Nature's works, she wears always one face, and speaks the same well-known language, striking on the heart, amidst unquiet thoughts and the tumult of the world, like the music of one's native tongue heard in some far off country.

We do not connect the same feelings with the works of art as with those of Nature, because we refer them to man, and associate with them the separate interests and passions which we know belong to those who are the authors or possessors of them. Nevertheless, there are some such objects, as a cottage, or a village church, which excite in us the same sensations as the sight of Nature, and which are, indeed, almost always included in descriptions of natural scenery.

"Or from the mountain's sides  
 View wilds and swelling floods,  
 And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires,  
 And hear their simple bell."

Which is in part, no doubt, because they are surrounded with natural objects, and in a populous country, inseparable, from them; and also because the human interest they excite relates to manners and feelings which are simple, common, such as all can enter into, and which, therefore, always produce a pleasing effect upon the mind.

—WILLIAM HAZLITT: *The Round Table*, Nov. 1814.

## LEIGH HUNT

(1784—1859)

### Windows

THE other day a butterfly came into our room and began beating himself against the upper panes of a window half open, thinking to get back. It is a nice point—relieving your butterfly—he is a creature so delicate. If you handle him without ceremony, you bring away on your fingers something which you take to be down, but which is plumes of feathers; and as there are no fairies at hand, two atoms high, to make pens of the quills, and write “articles” on the invisible, there would be a loss. Mr. Bentham’s ghost would visit us, shaking his venerable locks at such unnecessary pain-producing and reasonable-pleasure-pain-preventing heedlessness. Then if you brush him downwards, you stand a chance of hurting his antennæ, or feelers, and of not knowing what mischief you may do to his eyes, or his sense of touch, or his instruments of dialogue; for some philosophers hold that insects talk with their feelers as dumb people do with their fingers. However, some suffering must be hazarded in order to prevent worse, even to the least and most delicate of heaven’s creatures, who would not know pleasure if they did not know pain; and perhaps the merrier and happier they are in general, the greater the lumps of pain they can bear. Besides, all must have their share, or how would the burden of the great blockish necessity be equally distributed: and finally, what business had little *Papilio* to come into a place unfit for him, and get bothering himself with glass? Oh, faith!—your butterfly must learn experience, as well as your Buonaparte.

There was he, beating, fluttering, flouncing,—wondering that he could not get through so clear a matter (for



so glass appears to be to insects as well as to men), and tearing his silken little soul out with ineffectual energy. What plumage he must have left upon the pane ! What feathers and colours, strewed about, as if some fine lady had gone mad against a ball-room door, for not being let in !

But we had a higher simile for him than that. "Truly," thought we, "little friend, thou art like some of the great German transcendentalists, who, in thinking to reach at heaven by an impossible way (such at least it seemeth at present), run the hazard of cracking their brains, and spoiling their wings for ever ; whereas, if thou and they would but stoop a little lower, and begin with earth first, there, before thee, lieth open heaven as well as earth ; and thou mayest mount high as thou wilt, after thy own happy fashion, thinking less and enjoying all things."

And hereupon we contrived to get him downwards, —and forth out into the air sprang he,—first against the lime-trees, and then over them into the blue ether,—as if he had resolved to put our advice into practice.

We have before spoken of the fret and fury into which the common fly seems to put himself against a window. Bees appear to take it more patiently, out of a greater knowledge ; and slip about with a strange air of hopelessness. They seem to "give it up". These things, as Mr. Pepys said of the humanities at court, "it is pretty to observe." Glass itself is a phenomenon that might alone serve a reflecting observer with meditation for a whole morning,—so substantial and yet so air-like, so close and compact to keep away the cold, yet so transparent and facile to let in light, the gentlest of all things,—so palpably *something*, and yet to the eye and the perceptions a kind of *nothing* ! It seems absolutely to deceive insects in this respect, which is remarkable, considering how closely they handle it, and what microscopic eyes we suppose them to have. We should doubt (as we used to do) whether we did not mistake their ideas on the

subject, if we had not so often seen their repeated dashings of themselves against the panes, their stoppings (as if to take breath), and then their recommencement of the same violence. It is difficult to suppose that they do this for mere pleasure, for it looks as if they must hurt themselves. Observe in particular the tremendous thumps given himself by that great hulking fellow of a fly, that Ajax of the Diptera, the blue-bottle. Yet in autumn, in their old age, flies congregate in windows as elsewhere, and will take the matter so quietly as sometimes to stand still for hours together. We suppose they love the warmth, or the light ; and that either they have found out the secret as to the rest, or

" Years have brought the philosophic mind."

Why should Fly plague himself any longer with household matters which he cannot alter ? He has tried hard in his time ; and now he resigns himself like a wise insect, and will taste whatsoever tranquil pleasures remain for him, without beating his brains or losing his temper any longer. In natural livers, pleasure survives pain. Even the artificial, who keep up their troubles so long by pride, self-will, and the want of stimulants, contrive to get more pleasure than is supposed out of pain itself, especially by means of thinking themselves ill-used, and of grumbling. If the heart (for want of better training) does not much keep up its action with them, the spleen does ; and so there is action of some sort ; and whenever there is action, there is life ; and life is found to have something valuable in it for its own sake, apart from ordinary considerations either of pain or pleasure. But your fly and your philosopher are for pleasure too, to the last, if it be harmless. Give old *Musca* a grain of sugar, and see how he will put down his proboscis to it, and dot, and pound, and suck it in, and be as happy as an old West India gentleman pondering on his sugar-cane and extracting a pleasure out of some dulcet recollection.

Gamblers, for want of a sensation, have been

known to start up from their wine, and lay a bet upon two rain-drops coming down a pane of glass. How poor are those gentry, even when they win, compared with observers whose resources need never fail them ! To the latter, if they please, the rain-drop itself is a world,—a world of beauty and mystery and aboriginal idea, bringing before them a thousand images of proportion, and reflection, and the elements, and light, and colour, and roundness, and delicacy, and fluency and beneficence, and the refreshed flowers, and the growing corn, and dew-drops on the bushes, and the tears that fall from gentle eyes, and the ocean and the rainbow, and the origin of all things. In water we behold one of the old primeval mysteries of which the world was made. Thus, the commonest rain-drop on a pane of glass becomes a visitor from the solitudes of time.

A window, to those who have read a little in Nature's school, thus becomes a book, or a picture, on which her genius may be studied, handicraft though the canvas be, and little as the glazier may have thought of it. Not that we are to predicate ignorance of your glazier nowadays, any more than of other classes that compose the various readers of penny and three-half-penny philosophy,—cheap visitor, like the sunbeams, of houses of all sorts. The glazier could probably give many a richer man information respecting his glass, and his diamond, and his putty (no anti-climax in these analytical days), and let him into a secret or two, besides, respecting the amusement to be derived from it. (We have just got up from our work to inform ourselves of the nature and properties of the said mystery, putty ; and should blush for the confession, if the blush would not imply that a similar ignorance were less common with us than it is.)

But a window is a frame for other pictures besides its own ; sometimes for moving ones, as in the instance of a cloud going along, or a bird, or a flash of lightning ; sometimes for the distant landscape, sometimes the nearer one, or the trees that are close to it, with their lights and shades ; often for the passing multi-

tude. A picture, a harmony, is observable, even in the drapery of the curtains that invest it ; much more in the sunny vine-leaves or roses that may be visible on the borders, or that are trailed against it, and which render many a poor casement so pleasant. The other day, in a very humble cottage window in the suburbs, we saw that beautiful plant, the nasturtium, trained over it on several strings ; which must have furnished the inmates with a screen as they sate at their work or at their tea inside, and at the same time permitted them to see through into the road, thus constituting a far better blind than is to be found in many great houses. Sights like these give a favourable impression of the dispositions and habits of the people within,—show how superior they are to their sophistications, if rich, and how possessed of natural refinement, if among the poorer classes. Oh ! the human mind is a fine, graceful thing everywhere, if the music of nature does but seize its attention, and throw it into its natural attitude. But so little has the “schoolmaster” yet got hold of this point, or made way with it, and so occupied are men with digging gold out of the ground and neglecting the other treasures which they toss about in profusion during the operation (as if the clay were better than the flowers which it produced), that few make the most of the means and appliances for enjoyment that lie round about them, even in their very walls and rooms. Look at the windows down a street, and generally speaking they are all barren. The inmates might see through roses and geraniums, if they would ; but they do not think of it, or not with loving knowledge enough to take the trouble. Those who have the advantage of living in the country or the suburbs, are led in many instances to do better, though their necessity for agreeable sights is not so great. But the presence of nature tempts them to imitate her. There are few windows anywhere which might not be used to better advantage than they are, if we have a little money, or can procure even a few seeds. We have read an art of blowing the fire. There is an art even

in the shutting and opening of windows. People might close them more against dull objects, and open them more to pleasant ones, and to the air. For a few pence they might have beautiful colours and odours, and a pleasing task, emulous of the showers of April, beneficent as May ; for they who cultivate flowers in their windows(as we have hinted before) are led instinctively to cultivate them for others as well as themselves; nay, in one respect they do it more so ; for you may observe that wherever there is this "fenestral horticulture "(as Evelyn would have called your window-gardening), the flowers are turned with their faces towards the street.

But "there is an art in the shutting and opening of windows."—Ycs, for the sake of air (which ought to be had night as well as day, in reasonable measure, and with precautions), and for the sake of excluding, or admitting, what is to be seen out of doors. Suppose, for example, a house is partly opposite some pleasant, and partly some unpleasant, object ; the one, a tree or garden ; the other, a gin-shop or a squalid lane. The sight of the first should be admitted as constantly as possible, and with open window. That of the other, if you are rich enough, can be shut out with a painted blind, that shall substitute a beautiful landscape for the nuisance, or a blind of another sort will serve the purpose ; or if even a blind cannot be afforded, the shutters may be partly closed. Shutters should always be divided in two, horizontally, as well as otherwise, for purposes of this kind. It is sometimes pleasant to close the lower portion, if only to preserve a greater sense of quiet and seclusion, and to read or write the more to yourself ; light from above having both a softer and stronger effect than when admitted from all quarters. We have seen shutters by judicious management in this way, in the house of a poor man who had a taste for nature, contribute to the comfort and even elegance of a room in a surprising manner, and (by the opening of the lower portions and the closure of the upper) at once shut out all the sun that was not wanted, and convert a row of stunted trees into an

appearance of interminable foliage, as thick as if it had been in a forest.

"But the *fact* was otherwise ;" cries some fastidious personage, more nice than wise ; "you knew there was *no forest*, and therefore could not have been deceived."

"Well, my dear sir, but deception is not necessary to everyone's pleasure ; and *fact* is not merely what you take it for. The fact of there being no forest might have been the only fact with yourself, and so have prevented the enjoyment ; but to a livelier fancy there would have been the fact of the imagination, of the forest (for everything is a fact which *does* anything for us), and there would also have been the fact of having cultivated the imagination, and the fact of our willingness to be pleased, and the fact of the books we have read, and above all, the fact of the positive satisfaction. If a man be pleased, it is in vain you tell him he has no cause to be pleased. The cause is proved by the consequence. Whether the cause be rightly or wrongly cultivated is another matter. The good of it is assumed in the present instance ; and it would take more facts than are in the possession of a 'mere matter-of-fact man' to disprove it. Matter of fact and spirit of fact must both be appreciated, in order to do justice to the riches of nature. We are made of mind as well as body,—of imagination as well as senses. The same mysterious faculty which sees what is before the eyes, sees also what is suggested to the memory. Matter of fact is only the more palpable world, around which a thousand spirits of fact are playing, like angels in a picture. Not to see both is to be a poor unattended creature, who walks about in the world conscious of nothing but himself or at best of what the horse-jockey and the coach-maker has done for him. If his banker fails, he is ruined ! Not so those who, in addition to the resources of their industry, have stock in all the *banks* of nature and art (pardon us this pun for the sake of what grows on it), and whose consolations cannot wholly fail them, as long as they have a flower to look upon, and a blood

not entirely vitiated."

A window high up in a building, and commanding a fine prospect, is a sort of looking out of the air, and gives a sense of power, and of superiority to earth. The higher also you go, the healthier. We speak of such windows as Milton fancied, when he wished that his lamp should be seen at midnight in "some high lonely tower"; a passage justly admired for the good-nature as well as loftiness of the wish, thus desiring that wayfarers should be the better for his studies, and enjoy the evidence of their fellow-creature's vigils. But elevations of this kind are not readily to be had. As to health we believe that a very little lift above the ground-floor, and so on as you ascend, grows healthier in proportion. *Malaria* (bad air) in the countries where a plague of that kind is prevalent is understood to be confined to a certain distance from the earth; and we really believe, that even in the healthiest quarters, where no positive harm is done by nearness to it, the air is better as the houses ascend, and a seat in a window becomes valuable in proportion. By-and-by, perhaps, studies and other favourite sitting-rooms will be built accordingly; and more retrospective reverence be shown to the "garrets" that used to be so famous in the annals of authorship. The poor poet in Pope, who lay

"High in Drury Lane,

Lull'd by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,"

was better off there than if he had occupied the ground-floor. For our parts, in order that we may save the dignity of our three-half-penny meditations, and at the same time give evidence of practising what we preach, we shall finish by stating, that we have written this article in a floor neither high enough to be so poetical, nor low enough for too earthly a prose,—in a little study made healthy by an open window, and partly screened from overlookers by a bit of the shutter, while our look out presents us with a world of green leaves, and a red cottage top, a gothic

tower of a church in the distance, and a glorious apple-tree close at hand, laden with its yellow balls.

"Studded with apples, a beautiful show."

Some kindness of this sort Fortune has never failed to preserve to us, as if in return for the love we bear to her rolling globe ; and now that the sincerity of our good-will has become known, none seem inclined to grudge it us, or to dispute the account to which we may turn it, for others as well as ourselves.

—LEIGH HUNT : *Essays*.



## THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

(1800—1859)

### The Historian

WHILE our historians are practising all the arts of controversy, they miserably neglect the art of narration, the art of interesting the affections and presenting pictures to the imagination. That a writer may produce these effects without violating truth is sufficiently proved by many excellent biographical works. The immense popularity which well-written books of this kind have acquired, deserves the serious consideration of historians. Voltaire's *Charles the Twelfth*, Marmontel's *Memoirs*, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Southey's account of Nelson, are perused with delight by the most frivolous and indolent. Whenever any tolerable book of the same description makes its appearance, the circulating libraries are mobbed; the book societies are in commotion; the new novel lies uncut; the magazines and newspapers fill their columns with extracts. In the meantime histories of great empires, written by men of eminent ability, lie unread on the shelves of ostentatious libraries.

The writers of history seem to entertain an aristocratical contempt for the writers of memoirs. They think it beneath the dignity of men who describe the revolutions of nations to dwell on the details which constitute the charm of biography. They have imposed on themselves a code of conventional decencies as absurd as that which has been the bane of the French drama. The most characteristic and interesting circumstances are omitted or softened down, because, as we are told, they are too trivial for the majesty of history. The majesty of history seems to

resemble the majesty of the poor King of Spain, who died a martyr to ceremony because the proper dignitaries were not at hand to render him assistance.

That history would be more amusing if this etiquette were relaxed will, we suppose, be acknowledged. But would it be less dignified or less useful? What do we mean when we say that one past event is important and another insignificant? No past event has any intrinsic importance. The knowledge of it is valuable only as it leads us to form just calculations with respect to the future. A history which does not serve this purpose, though it may be filled with battles, treaties, and commotions, is as useless as the series of turnpike tickets collected by Sir Matthew Mite.

Let us suppose that Lord Clarendon, instead of filling hundreds of folio pages with copies of state papers in which the same assertions and contradictions are repeated till the reader is overpowered with weariness, had condescended to be the Boswell of the Long Parliament. Let us suppose that he had exhibited to us the wise and lofty self-government of Hampden, leading while he seemed to follow, and propounding unanswerable arguments in the strongest forms with the modest air of an inquirer anxious for information; the delusions which misled the noble spirit of Vane: the coarse fanaticism which concealed the yet loftier genius of Cromwell, destined to control a mutinous army and a factious people, to abase the flag of Holland, to arrest the victorious arms of Sweden, and to hold the balance firm between the rival monarchies of France and Spain. Let us suppose that he had made his Cavaliers and Roundheads talk in their own style; that he had reported some of the ribaldry of Rupert's pages, and some of the cant of Harrison and Fleetwood. Would not his work in that case have been more interesting? Would it not have been more accurate?

A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false. The circumstances

which have most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity—these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions. Their progress is rarely indicated by what historians are pleased to call important events. They are not achieved by armies, or enacted by senates. They are sanctioned by no treaties, and recorded in no archives. They are carried on in every school, in every church, behind ten thousand counters, at ten thousand firesides. The upper current of society presents no certain criterion by which we can judge of the direction in which the under current flows. We read of defeats and victories. But we know that nations may be miserable amidst victories and prosperous amidst defeats. We read of the fall of wise ministers and of the rise of profligate favourites. But we must remember how small a proportion the good or evil effected by a single statesman can bear to the good or evil of a great social system.

Bishop Watson compares a geologist to a gnat mounted on an elephant, and laying down theories as to the whole internal structure of the vast animal, from the phenomena of the hide. The comparison is unjust to the geologists ; but it is very applicable to those historians who write as if the body-politic were homogeneous, who look only on the surface of affairs, and never think of the mighty and various organisation which lies deep below.

In the works of such writers as these, England, at the close of the Seven Years' War, is in the highest state of prosperity : at the close of the American War she is in a miserable and degraded condition ; as if the people were not on the whole as rich, as well governed, and as well educated at the latter period as at the former. We have read books called Histories of England, under the reign of George the Second, in which the rise of Methodism is not even mentioned. A hundred years hence this breed of authors will, we

hope, be extinct. If it should still exist, the late ministerial interregnum will be described in terms which will seem to imply that all government was at an end : that the social contract was annulled ; and that the hand of every man was against his neighbour, until the wisdom and virtue of the new cabinet educated order out of the chaos of anarchy. We are quite certain that misconceptions as gross prevail at this moment respecting many important parts of our annals.

The effect of historical reading is analogous, in many respects, to that produced by foreign travel. The student, like the tourist, is transported into a new state of society. He sees new fashions. He hears new modes of expression. His mind is enlarged by contemplating the wide diversities of laws, of morals, and of manners. But men may travel far, and return with minds as contracted as if they had never stirred from their own market-town. In the same manner, men may know the dates of many battles and the genealogies of many royal houses, and yet be no wiser. Most people look at past times as princes look at foreign countries. More than one illustrious stranger has landed on our island amidst the shouts of a mob, has dined with the king, has hunted with the master of the stag-hounds, has seen the guards reviewed, and a knight of the garter installed, has cantered along Regent Street, has visited St. Paul's, and noted down its dimensions ; and has then departed, thinking that he has seen England. He has, in fact, seen a few public buildings, public men, and public ceremonies. But of the vast and complex system of society, of the fine shades of national character, of the practical operation of government and laws, he knows nothing. He who would understand these things rightly must not confine his observations to palaces and solemn days. He must see ordinary men as they appear in their ordinary business and in their ordinary pleasures. He must mingle in the crowds of the exchange and the coffee-house. He must obtain admittance to the

convivial table and the domestic hearth. He must bear with vulgar expressions. He must not shrink from exploring even the retreats of misery. He who wishes to understand the condition of mankind in former ages must proceed on the same principle. If he attends only to public transactions, to wars, congresses, and debates, his studies will be as unprofitable as the travels of those imperial, royal, and serene sovereigns who form their judgment of our island from having gone in state to a few fine sights, and from having held formal conferences with a few great officers.

The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But, by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed: some transactions are prominent; others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made intimately known to us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line.

If a man, such as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the

ministerial changes. But with these he would interperse the details which are the charm of historical romances. At Lincoln Cathedral there is a beautiful painted window, which was made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been rejected by his master. It is so far superior to every other in the church, that, according to the tradition, the vanquished artist killed himself from mortification. Sir Walter Scott, in the same manner, has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than their's. But a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated. The history of the government, and the history of the people, would be exhibited in that mode in which alone they can be exhibited justly, in inseparable conjunction and intermixture. We should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon, and for their phraseology in Old Mortality ; for one half of King James in Hume, and for the other half in the Fortunes of Nigel.

The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with colouring from romance, ballad, and chronicle. We should find ourselves in the company of knights such as those of Froissart, and of pilgrims such as those who rode with Chaucer from the Tabard. Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest,—from the royal cloth of state to the den of the outlaw ; from the throne of the legate to the chimney-corner where the begging friar regaled himself. Palmers, minstrels, crusaders,—the stately monastery, with the good cheer in its refectory and the high mass in its chapel,—the manor-house, with its hunting and hawking,—the tournament, with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets and the cloth of gold,—would give truth and life to the representation. We should perceive, in a thousand slight touches, the importance of the privileged burgher, and the fierce and haughty spirit which swelled

under the collar of the degraded villain. The revival of letters would not merely be described in a few magnificent periods. We should discern, in innumerable particulars, the fermentation of mind, the eager appetite for knowledge, which distinguished the sixteenth from the fifteenth century. In the Reformation we should see, not merely a schism which changed the ecclesiastical constitution of England and the mutual relations of the European powers, but a moral war which raged in every family, which set the father against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. Henry would be painted with the skill of Tacitus. We should have the change of his character from his profuse and joyous youth to his savage and imperious old age. We should perceive the gradual progress of selfish and tyrannical passions in a mind not naturally insensible or ungenerous; and to the last we should detect some remains of that open and noble temper which endeared him to a people whom he oppressed, struggling with the hardness of despotism and the irritability of disease. We should see Elizabeth in all her weakness and in all her strength, surrounded by the handsome favourites whom she never trusted, and the wise old statesmen whom she never dismissed, uniting in herself the most contradictory qualities of both her parents,—the coquetry, the caprice, the petty malice of Anne,—the haughty and resolute spirit of Henry. We have no hesitation in saying that a great artist might produce a portrait of this remarkable woman at least as striking as that in the novel of *Kenilworth*, without employing a single trait not authenticated by ample testimony. In the meantime, we should see arts cultivated, wealth accumulated, the conveniences of life improved. We should see the keeps, where nobles, insecure themselves, spread insecurity around them, gradually giving place to the halls of peaceful opulence, to the oriel of Longleat, and the stately pinnacles of Burleigh. We should see towns extended, deserts cultivated, the hamlets of fishermen turned into wealthy havens, the meal of the peasant improved, and his hut more commodiously furnished,

We should see those opinions and feelings which produced the great struggle against the House of Stuart slowly growing up in the bosom of private families, before they manifested themselves in parliamentary debates. Then would come the civil war. Those skirmishes on which Clarendon dwells so minutely would be told, as Thucydides would have told them, with perspicuous conciseness. They are merely connecting links. But the great characteristics of the age, the loyal enthusiasm of the brave English gentry, the fierce licentiousness of the swearing, dicing, drunken reprobates, whose excesses disgraced the royal cause,—the austerity of the Presbyterian Sabbaths in the city, the extravagance of the independent preachers in the camp, the precise garb, the severe countenance, the petty scruples, the affected accent, the absurd names and phrases which marked the Puritans,—the valour, the policy, the public spirit, which lurked beneath these ungraceful disguises,—the dreams of the raving Fifth-monarchy man, the dreams, scarcely less wild, of the philosophic republican,—all these would enter into the representation, and render it at once more exact and more striking.

The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. It would be not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it. Many truths, too, would be learned, which can be learned in no other manner. As the history of states is generally written, the greatest and more momentous revolutions seem to come upon them like supernatural inflictions, without warning or cause. But the fact is, that such revolutions are almost always the consequences of moral changes, which have gradually passed on the mass of the community, and which ordinarily proceed far before their progress is indicated by any public measure. An intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations is therefore absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events. A narrative,



defective in this respect, is as useless as a medical treatise which should pass by all the symptoms attendant on the early stage of a disease and mention only what occurs when the patient is beyond the reach of remedies.

A historian, such as we have been attempting to describe, would indeed be an intellectual prodigy. In his mind, powers scarcely compatible with each other, must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner see another Shakespeare or another Homer. The highest excellence to which any single faculty can be brought would be less surprising than such a happy and delicate combination of qualities. Yet the contemplation of imaginary models is not an unpleasant or useless employment of the mind. It cannot indeed produce perfection; but it produces improvement, and nourishes that generous and liberal fastidiousness which is not inconsistent with the strongest sensibility to merit, and which, while it exalts our conceptions of the art, does not render us unjust to the artist.

—THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY: *Essay on History.*

## JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN

(1801—1890)

### The Idea of a University

IT WERE well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health," as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue," with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term ;—talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill ; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely intellectual ideas, but still not a state or quality of the intellect ; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a habit ; and science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging in English, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that, on an occasion like this, many words are necessary, in order, first, to bring out and convey what surely is no difficult idea in itself,—that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end ; next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable object ; and lastly, to describe and make the mind realize the particular perfection in which that object consists. Every one knows practically what are the

constituents of health or of virtue ; and every one recognizes health and virtue as ends to be pursued ; it is otherwise with intellectual excellence, and this must be my excuse, if I seem to anyone to be bestowing a good deal of labour on a preliminary matter.

In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination ; terms which are not uncommonly given to it by writers of this day : but, whatever name we bestow on it, it is, I believe, as a matter of history, the business of a university to make this intellectual culture its direct scope, or to employ itself in the education of the intellect,—just as the work of a hospital lies in healing the sick or wounded, of a riding or fencing school, or of a gymnasium, in exercising the limbs, of an almshouse, in aiding and solacing the old, of an orphanage, in protecting innocence, of a penitentiary, in restoring the guilty. I say, a university, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the church, has this object and this mission ; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production ; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty ; its function is intellectual culture ; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out 'towards truth, and to grasp it.

This, I said in my foregoing discourse, was the object of a university, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic Church, or from the state, or from any other power which may use it ; and I illustrated this in various ways. I said that the intellect must have an excellence of its own, for there was nothing which had not its specific good ; that the word "educate" would not be used of intellectual culture, as it is used, had not the intellect had an end of its own ; that, had it not such an end, there would be no meaning in calling certain intellectual exercises "liberal," in contrast with "useful," as is commonly done ; that the very notion of

a philosophical temper implied it, for it threw us back upon research and system as ends in themselves, distinct from effects and works of any kind ; that a philosophical scheme of knowledge, or system of sciences, could not, from the nature of the case, issue in any one definite art or pursuit, as its end ; and that, on the other hand, the discovery and contemplation of truth, to which search and systematizing led, were surely sufficient ends, though nothing beyond them were added, and that they had ever been accounted sufficient by mankind.

Here then I take up the subject ; and, having determined that the cultivation of the intellect is an end distinct and sufficient in itself, and that, so far as words go, it is an enlargement or illumination, I proceed to inquire what this mental breadth, or power, or light, or philosophy consists in. A hospital heals a broken limb or cures a fever : what does an institution effect, which professes the health, not of the body, not of the soul, but of the intellect ? What is this good, which in former times, as well as our own, has been found worth the notice, the appropriation of the Catholic Church ?

I have then to investigate, in the discourses which follow, those qualities and characteristics of the intellect in which its cultivation issues or rather consists ; and with a view of assisting myself in this undertaking, I shall recur to certain questions which have already been touched upon. These questions are three : *viz.*, the relation of intellectual culture, first, to *mere* knowledge ; secondly, to *professional* knowledge ; and thirdly, to *religious* knowledge. In other words, are *acquirements* and *attainments* the scope of university education ? or *expertness in particular arts and pursuits* ? or *moral and religious proficiency* ? or something besides these three ? These questions I shall examine in succession, with the purpose I have mentioned and I hope to be excused, if, in this anxious undertaking, I am led to repeat what, either in these discourses or elsewhere, I have already put upon paper. And first, of *mere knowledge*, or learning, and its connection with intellectual illumination or philosophy.

I suppose the *prima facie* view which the public at large would take of a university, considering it as a place of education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them: he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbours all round him. He has opinions, religious, political and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his school-fellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive; he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the elements of mathematics, and for his taste in the poets and orators, still, while at school, or at least, till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when he is leaving for the university, he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, despatch, persevering application; for these are the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphati-

cally producible, and at a moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar: an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subjects of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture is in the minds of men identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a university: and with the best of reasons so far as this that there is no true culture without acquirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any trustworthy conclusion. There are indeed persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his view upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while: he may get a name in his day: but this will be all. His readers are sure to find in the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge then is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind, and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied, it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle: however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion that it is the whole of the matter. A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a great deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is the fact of the great number of studies which

are pursued in a university, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject : examinations are held : prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical professors ; professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty ; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information ; what then is wanting for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments ? what is grasp of mind but acquirement ? where shall philosophical repose be found, but in the consciousness and enjoyment of large intellectual possessions.

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a liberal education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter* ; and I shall best attain my object, by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are, not, and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge for yourselves, gentlemen, whether knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.

For instance, let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts ; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis, — then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward, and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a conscious-

ness of mental enlargement ; he does not stand where he did, he has a new centre, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits, and their variety and independence of each other, throw us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new faculties, or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge ; like a prisoner, who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence physical science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquillizing influence upon him.

Again the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why ? because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging of passing events and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, travelling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship,—gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-



minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible influence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that "the world is all before it where to choose," and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of wilful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation,—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened; and, like the judgment-stricken king in the tragedy, they see two suns, and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, religion had its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and medi-

tating on death and judgment, heaven and hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition of the means of that sense of enlargement, or enlightenment of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain, that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards of that mental centre, to which both what we know, and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognized to

which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of universal knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word "creation" suggests the Creator, and "subjects" a sovereign, so in the mind of the philosopher, as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, officers, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one, with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true centre.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, unsettlement, and superstition, which is the lot of the many. Men, whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those on the other hand who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way every step they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occur-

rences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss; cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another. It is the *τετραγωνον* [foursquare] of the Peripatetic, and has the *nil admirari* [to be moved by nothing] of the Stoic,—

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum,  
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

[Happy is he who has come to know the sequences of things, and is thus above all fear and the dread march of fate and the roar of greedy Acheron.] There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is heroism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no institution can aim: here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau ideal*, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is

almost prophetic from its knowledge of history ; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature ; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom, from littleness and prejudice ; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it ; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a university is not learning or acquirement, but rather, is thought or reason exercised upon knowledge, or what may be called philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of university education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend ; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level ; we must generalize, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by means of them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited ; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steepes, and tangled woods, and everything smiling indeed, but in a maze ? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, where we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travellers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitring its neighbourhood. In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you ; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. *Imperat aut servit* [it rules or it serves] ; if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon ; otherwise,

*Vis consili'expers mole ruit sua.*

[Brute force without intelligence falls by its own weight]

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound : there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed ! How many writers are there of Ecclesiastical history, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts ! The sermons, again, of the English divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertoires of miscellaneous and officious learning ! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking ; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that such knowledge is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it ; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the memory can tyrannize, as well as the imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognize the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the memory. In such persons reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman ; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self control ; they passively endure the succession of

impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause ; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within ? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure ; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop :—it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal University ; they adorn it in the eyes of men : I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims ; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education ; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years,—not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects ; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not ; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of

a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil ; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it ; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with the mind ; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the school boy, or the school girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain ; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as they could with a good conscience, to humour a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporizing concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

It must not be supposed that, because I so speak, therefore I have some sort of fear of the education of the people : on the contrary, the more education they have, the better, so that it is really education. Nor am I an enemy to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue : on the contrary, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain ; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and



occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when after all, you only mean, amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the ideal, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it: we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be party in the work. A university is, according to the usual designation, an alma mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill. 01153x95642.835

I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called university, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and save its

degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a university which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect,—mind, I do not say which is morally the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief,—but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science. And, paradox as this may seem, still it results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the universities and scholastic establishments, to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics,—I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is,—able to subdue the earth, able

to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained ? I suppose as follows : When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them ; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a large school or a college : and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble ; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is moulded together, and gains one tone and one character.

Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations ; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci*, as it is sometimes called ; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow.....

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your college gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind ; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your babel. Few indeed that are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found), who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what everyone knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating ; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others :—but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons, who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects, against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premise and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained

nothing really by their anxious labours, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us : for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still ; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the college and the university altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious ! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests ! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled prince to find "tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks ! "...

—JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL, NEWMAN :  
*The Idea of a University.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON  
(1803—1882)

Gifts

Gifts of one who loved me,—  
'Twas high time they came ;  
When he ceased to love me,  
Time they stopped for shame.

It is said that the world is in a state of bankruptcy, that the world owes the world more than the world can pay, and ought to go into chancery, and be sold. I do not think this general insolvency, which involves in some sort all the population, to be the reason of the difficulty experienced at Christmas and New Year, and other times in bestowing gifts ; since it is always so pleasant to be generous, though very vexatious to pay debts. But the impediment lies in the choosing. If, at any time, it comes into my head that a present is due from me to somebody, I am puzzled what to give until the opportunity is gone. Flowers and fruits are always fit presents ; flowers, because they are a proud assertion that a ray of beauty out-values all the utilities of the world. These gay natures contrast with the somewhat stern countenance of ordinary nature : they are like music heard out of a work-house. Nature does not cocker us : we are children, not pets : she is not fond : everything is dealt to us without fear or favour, after severe universal laws. Yet these delicate flowers look like the frolic and interference of love and beauty. Men used to tell us that we love flattery, even though we are not deceived by it, because it shows that we are of importance enough to be courted. Something like that pleasure the flowers give us : what am I to whom these sweet hints are addressed ? Fruits are acceptable gifts because they are

the flower of commodities and admit of fantastic values being attached to them. If a man should send to me to come a hundred miles to visit him, and should set before me a basket of fine summer fruit, I should think there was some proportion between the labour and the reward.

For common gifts, necessity makes pertinences and beauty every day, and one is glad when an imperative leaves him no option, since if the man at the door have no shoes, you have not to consider whether you could procure him a paint-box. And as it is always pleasing to see a man eat bread, or drink water, in the house or out of doors, so it is always a great satisfaction to supply these first wants. Necessity does everything well. In our condition of universal dependence, it seems heroic to let the petitioner be the judge of his necessity, and to give all that is asked, though at great inconvenience. If it be a fantastic desire, it is better to leave to others the office of punishing him. I can think of many parts I should prefer playing to that of the Furies. Next to things of necessity, the rule for a gift which one of my friends prescribed is, that we might convey to some person that which properly belonged to his character, and was easily associated with him in thought. But our tokens of compliment and love are for the most part barbarous. Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem ; the shepherd, his lamb ; the farmer, corn ; the miner, a gem ; the sailor, coral and shells ; the painter, his picture ; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing. This is right and pleasing, for it restores society in so far to the primary basis, when a man's biography is conveyed in his gift, and every man's wealth is an index of his merit. But it is a cold, lifeless business when you go to the shops to buy me something, which does not represent your life and talent but a goldsmith's. This is fit for kings, and rich men who represent kings, and a false state of property, to make presents of gold and silver stuffs, as a kind of symbolical sin-offering, or payment of blackmail.

The law of benefits is a difficult channel, which requires careful sailing, or rude boats. It is not the office of a man to receive gifts. How dare you give them? We wish to be self-sustained. We do not quite forgive a giver. The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being bitten. We can receive anything from love, for that is a way of receiving it from ourselves; but not from any one who assumes to bestow. We sometimes hate the meat which we eat, because there seems something of degrading dependence in living by it.

Brother, if Jove to thee a present make,  
Take heed that from his hands thou nothing take.

We ask the whole. Nothing less will content us. We arraign society if it do not give us besides earth, and fire, and water, opportunity, love, reverence, and objects of veneration.

He is a good man who can receive a gift well. We are either glad or sorry at a gift, and both emotions are unbecoming. Some violence, I think, is done, some degradation borne, when I rejoice or grieve at a gift. I am sorry when my independence is invaded, or when a gift comes from such as do not know my spirit, and so the act is not supported; and if the gift pleases me overmuch, then I should be ashamed that the donor should read my heart, and see that I love his commodity and not him. The gift, to be true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him. When the waters are at level, then my goods pass to him, and his to me. All his are mine, all mine his. I say to him, How can you give me this pot of oil, or this flagon of wine, when all your oil and wine is mine, which belief of mine this gift seems to deny? Hence the fitness of beautiful, not useful things for gifts. This giving is *flut usurpation*, and therefore when the beneficiary is ungrateful, as all beneficiaries hate all Timons, not at all considering the value of the gift, but looking back to the greater store it was taken from, I rather sympathise with the beneficiary than with the anger of my Lord Timon. For, the expectation of gratitude is mean, and is continually punished by the total



insensibility of the obliged person. It is a great happiness to get off without injury and heart-burning, from one who has had the ill-luck to be served by you. It is a very onerous business, this of being served, and the debtor naturally wishes to give you a slap. A golden text for these gentlemen is that which I so admire in the Buddhist, who never thanks, and who says, "Do not flatter your benefactors."

The reason of these discords I conceive to be that there is no commensurability between a man and any gift. You cannot give anything to a magnanimous person. After you have served him he at once puts you in debt by his magnanimity. The service a man renders his friend is trivial and selfish, compared with the service he knows his friend stood in readiness to yield him, alike before he had begun to serve his friend and now also. Compared with that goodwill I bear my friend, the benefit it is in my power to render him seems small. Besides, our action on each other, good as well as evil, is so incidental and at random, that we can seldom hear the acknowledgments of any person who would thank us for a benefit, without some shame and humiliation. We can rarely strike a direct stroke, but must be content with an oblique one ; we seldom have the satisfaction of yielding a direct benefit, which is directly received. But rectitude scatters favours on every side without knowing it, and receives with wonder the thanks of all people.

I fear to breathe any treason against the majesty of love, which is the genius and god of gifts, and to whom we must not affect to prescribe. Let him give kingdoms or flower-leaves indifferently. There are persons from whom we always expect fairy-tokens ; let us not cease to expect them. This is prerogative, and not to be limited by our municipal rules. For the rest, I like to see that we cannot be bought and sold. The best of hospitality and of generosity is also not in the will, but in fate. I find that I am not much to you ; you do not need me ; you do not feel me ; then am I thrust out of doors, though you proffer me house and lands. No services are

of any value, but only likeness. When I have attempted to join myself to others by services, it proved an intellectual trick,—no more. They eat your service like apples, and leave you out. But love them, and they feel you, and delight in you all the time.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON : *Essays*.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822—1888)

### Sweetness and Light

THE disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. With us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other

people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are, implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says :—‘The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent.’ This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion ; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection ; it is a *study of perfection*. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto.

Montesquieu's words : 'To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent !' so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson : 'To make reason and the will of God prevail !'

Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking and it wants to be beginning to act ; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action ; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good ; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which is not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardour, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us ? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking ? But now the iron force of adhesion

to the old routine,—social, political, religious,—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this and, is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavour of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the

deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is, and to make it prevail ; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—culture seeking the determination of this question through *all* the voices of human experience, which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainly to its solution,—likewise reaches, Religion says : *The kingdom of God is within you* ; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion : ‘It is in making endless additions to itself in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture.’ Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it ; and here, too, it coincides with religion.

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. And here,

once more, culture lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that 'to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness.'

But, finally, perfection,—as culture from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it,—is a harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here culture goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, or hatred of all limits to the unstrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of 'Every man for himself.' Above all,



the idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere. And meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for everyone to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger ; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve : but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery ? what is population but machinery ? what is coal but machinery ? what are railroads but machinery ? what is wealth but machinery ? what are even religious organisations but machinery ? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. ' May not every man in England say what he likes ? '—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks ; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is

worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that everyone should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Everyone must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what is greatness?—culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed, the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard

it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly, than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe, that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines. Culture says : ' Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice ; look at them attentively ; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds ; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it ? ' And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigour, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery ; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them ! Why, one has heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had some-

thing in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them ; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right !

But bodily health and vigour, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery ; they have a more real and essential value. True ; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarising a worship as that is. Everyone with anything like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigour and activity. 'Bodily exercise profiteth little ; but godliness is profitable unto all things,' says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly :—'Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, *in reference to the services of the mind.*' But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assign to it, a special and limited character,—this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus :—'It is a sign of *ἀφύλα*,' says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—'to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body ; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way : the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern.' This is admirable ; and, indeed, the Greek word *ἐφύλα*, a finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to

conceive it : a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites 'the two, noblest of things'—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*,—'the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*.' The *ἡσυχία* is the man who tends towards sweetness and light ; the *ἀφύς*, 'on the other hand,' is our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection ; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organisations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side,—which is the dominant idea of religion,—has been enabled to have ; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other.

The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having

regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it is wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organisations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil, to overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organisations within which they have found it, language which properly

applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies them in abundance with this grand language. And very freely do they use it; yet it is really the severest possible criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organisations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism. Nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: 'The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion.' There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it, language, too which is in our mouths every day. 'Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling,' says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal: 'The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!' And religious organisations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organisation which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organisations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry,

speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organisations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage a harmonious perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organisations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail. They have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense. They have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable. And they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organisations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it,—so I say with



regard to the religious organisations. Look at a life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*,—a life of jealousy of the Establishment ; disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons ; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light and perfection !

Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organisations of this country, was, a short time ago, giving an account of the crowd at Epsom on the Derby Day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd ; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question : and how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours ? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organisation as you yourself reflect it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness ? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organisations,—expressing, as I have said, the most widespread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organisation or other ; we all call ourselves in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. Children of God ;—it is an immense pretension !—and how are we to justify it ? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our city which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London ! London.

with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publice egestas, privatim opulentia*,—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome.—unequalled in the world ! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph* ! I say that when our religious organisations,—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use ; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organisations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth,—mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful ; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete, a harmonious perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it is machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organisation, or whether it is a religious organisation,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organisation, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith,

enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it ; and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose.

Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris, —and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question ; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life ; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it ; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports ; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis ; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future ; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations, of Puritans and Nonconformists has been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech may be necessary for the society of the future,

but the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph* in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government may be necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth:—the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as anyone who reads Dr. Newman's *Apology* may see, against what in one word may be called 'Liberalism.' Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore:—

Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris ?

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the car-

dinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelligent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford Movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr. Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the Dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movements, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism,—who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the

way for its sudden collapse and supersession? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is *an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy*. Mr. Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise;" he leads his disciples to believe,—what the Englishman is always too ready to believe,—that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy,—'the men,' as he calls them, 'upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests,'—he cries out to them: 'See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have

made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world.' Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Lowe debauch the minds of the middle-classes, and make such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he is, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built. Only the middle-classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle-class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the *Journeyman Engineer*, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection,—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy,—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of its own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring

to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism. Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr. Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte,—one of them, Mr. Congreve, is an old friend of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character,—are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr. Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism,—its fierceness, and its addition to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrowness and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race.

The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, will have us observe that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the natural current there is in human affairs, and



to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see, not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of an increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing.

I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me whom America has yet produced,—Benjamin Franklin, I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. 'I give,' he continues, 'a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend.' We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: 'Then Satan answered the Lord, and said: "Doth Job fear God for nought?"' Franklin makes this: 'Does your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?' I well remember how when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: 'After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!' So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the *Deontology*. There I read: 'While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience.' From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer. I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for supplying the rule of human society, for perfection.

Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle, or Mr. Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text: 'Be not ye called Rabbi!' and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world; and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture,—eternally passing onwards and seeking,—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with the inexhaustible indulgence proper to culture, the consideration of circumstances, the severe judgment of actions joined to the merciful judgment of persons. 'The man of culture is in politics,' cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, 'one of the poorest mortals alive!' Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a 'turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action.' Of what use is culture, he asks, except for 'a critic of new books or a professor of *belles lettres*?' Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses, through the whole production in which Mr. Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of no use because, like religion,—that other effort after perfection,—it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and

light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—nourished,

and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they *humanised* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: 'Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the time; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet.'

—MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Culture and Anarchy*.

## SAMUEL BUTLER

(1835--1902)

### How to Make the Best of Life

I HAVE been asked to speak on the question how to make the best of life, but may as well confess at once that I know nothing about it. I cannot think that I have made the best of my own life, nor is it likely that I shall make much better of what may or may not remain to me. I do not even know how to make the best of the twenty minutes that your committee has placed at my disposal, and as for life as a whole, whoever yet made the best of such a colossal opportunity by conscious effort and deliberation? In little things, no doubt, deliberate and conscious effort will help us, but we are speaking of large issues, and such kingdoms of heaven as the making the best of these come not by observation.

The question, therefore, on which I have undertaken to address you is, as you must all know, fatuous, if it be faced seriously. Life is like playing a violin solo in public and learning the instrument as one goes on. One cannot make the best of such impossibilities, and the question is doubly fatuous until we are told which of our two lives—the conscious or the unconscious—is held by the asker to be the truer life. Which does the question contemplate—the life we know, or the life which others may know, but which we know not?

Death gives a life to some men and women compared with which their so-called existence here is as nothing. Which is the truer life of Shakespeare, Handel, that divine woman who wrote the *Odyssey*, and of Jane Austen—the life which palpitated with sensible warm motion within their own bodies, or that in virtue of which they are still palpitating in ours? In whose consciousness does their truest life consist—their own, or ours? Can Shakespeare be said to have begun his true life till a hundred years or so after he

was dead and buried? His physical life was but as an embryonic stage, a coming up out of darkness, a twilight and dawn before the sunrise of that life of the world to come which he was to enjoy hereafter. We all live for a while after we are gone hence, but we are for the most part still born, or at any rate die in infancy, as regards that life which every age and country has recognised as higher and truer than the one of which we are now sentient. As the life of the race is larger, longer, and in all respects more to be considered than that of the individual, so is the life we live in the other larger and more important than the one we live in ourselves. This appears nowhere perhaps more plainly than in the case of great teachers, who often in the lives of their pupils produce an effect that reaches far beyond anything produced while their single lives were yet unsupplemented by those other lives into which they infused their own.

Death to such people is the ending of a short life, but it does not touch the life they are already living in those whom they have taught; and happily, as none can know when he shall die, so none can make sure that he too shall not live long beyond the grave; for the life after death is like money before it—no one can be sure that it may not fall to him or her even at the eleventh hour. Money and immortality come in such odd unaccountable ways that no one is cut off from hope. We may not have made either of them for ourselves, but yet another may give them to us in virtue of his or her love, which shall illumine us for ever, and establish us in some heavenly mansion whereof we neither dreamed nor shall ever dream. Look at the Doge Loredano Loredani, the old man's smile upon whose face has been reproduced so faithfully in so many lands that it can never henceforth be forgotten—would he have had one hundredth part of the life he now lives had he not been linked awhile with one of those heaven-sent men who know *che cos'è amor*? Look at Rembrandt's old woman in our National Gallery; had she died before she was eighty-three years old she would not have been living now. Then, when she was eighty-three, immort-

ality perched upon her as a bird on a withered bough.

I seem to hear someone say that this is a mockery, a piece of special pleading, a giving of stones to those that ask for bread. Life is not life unless we can feel it, and a life limited to a knowledge of such fraction of our work as may happen to survive us is no true life in other people; salve it as we may, death is not life any more than black is white.

The objection is not so true as it sounds. I do not deny that we had rather not die, nor do I pretend that much even in the case of the most favoured few can survive them beyond the grave. It is only because this is so that our own life is possible; others have made room for us, and we should make room for others in our turn without undue repining. What I maintain is that a not inconsiderable number of people do actually attain to a life beyond the grave which we can all feel forcibly enough, whether they can do so or not—that this life tends with increasing civilisation, to become more and more potent, and that it is better worth considering, in spite of its being unfelt by ourselves, than any which we have felt or can ever feel in our own persons.

Take an extreme case. A group of people are photographed by Edison's new process—say Titians, Trebelli, and Jenny Lind, with any two of the finest men singers the age has known—let them be photographed incessantly for half an hour while they perform a scene in *Lohengrin*; let all be done stereoscopically. Let them be photographed at the same time so that their minutest shades of intonation are preserved, let the slides be coloured by a competent artist and then let the scene be called suddenly into sight and sound, say a hundred years hence. Are those people dead or alive? Dead to themselves they are, but while they live so powerfully and so livingly in us, which is the greater paradox—to say that they are alive or that they are dead? To myself it seems that their life in others would be more truly life than their death to themselves in death. Granted that they do not present all the phenomena of life—whoever does so even when he is held to be

alive? We are held to be alive because we present a sufficient number of living phenomena to let the others go without saying; those who see us take the part for the whole here as in everything else, and surely, in the case supposed above, the phenomena of life predominate so powerfully over those of death, that the people themselves must be held to be more alive than dead. Our living personality is, as the word implies, only our mask, and those who still own such a mask as I have supposed have a living personality. Granted again that the case just put is an extreme one; still many a man and many a woman has so stamped him or herself on his work that, though we would gladly have the aid of such accessories as we doubtless presently shall have to the livingness of our great dead, we can see them very sufficiently through the masterpieces they have left us.

As for their own unconsciousness I do not deny it. The life of the embryo was unconscious before birth, and so is the life—I am speaking only of the life revealed to us by natural religion—after death. But as the embryonic and infant life of which we were unconscious was the most potent factor in our after life of consciousness, so the effect which we may unconsciously produce in others after death, and it may be even before it on those who have never seen us, is in all sober seriousness our truer and more abiding life, and the one which those who would make the best of their sojourn here will take most into their consideration.

Unconsciousness is no bar to livingness. Our conscious actions are a drop in the sea as compared with our unconscious ones. Could we know all the life that is in us by way of circulation, nutrition, breathing, waste and repair, we should learn what an infinitesimally small part consciousness plays in our present existence; yet our unconscious life is as truly life as our conscious life, and though it is unconscious to itself it emerges into an indirect and vicarious consciousness in our other and conscious self, which exists but in virtue of our unconscious self. So we have also a vicarious



consciousness in others. The unconscious life of those that have gone before us has in great part moulded us into such men and women as we are, and our unconscious lives will in like manner have a vicarious consciousness in others, though we be dead enough to it in ourselves.

If it is again urged that it matters not to us how much we may be alive in others, if we are to know nothing about it, I reply that the common instinct of all who are worth considering gives the lie to such cynicism. I see here present some who have achieved and others who no doubt will achieve, success in literature. Will one of them hesitate to admit that it is a lively pleasure to her to feel that on the other side of the world someone may be smiling happily over her work, and that she is thus living in that person though she knows nothing about it? Here it seems to me that true faith comes in. Faith does not consist, as the Sunday School pupil said, 'in the power of believing that which we know to be untrue.' It consists in holding fast that which the healthiest and most kindly instincts of the best and most sensible men and women are intuitively possessed of, without caring to require much evidence further than the fact that such people are so convinced; and for my own part I find the best men and women I know unanimous in feeling that life in others, even though we know about it, is nevertheless a thing to be desired and gratefully accepted if we can get it either before death or after. I observe also that a large number of men and women do actually attain to such life, and in some cases continue so to live, if not for ever, yet to what is practically much the same thing. Our life then in this world is, to natural religion as much as to revealed, a period of probation. The use we make of it is to settle how far we are to enter into another, and whether that other is to be a heaven of just affection or a hell of righteous condemnation.

Who, then, are the most likely so to run that they may obtain this veritable prize of our high calling? Setting aside such lucky numbers, drawn as it were in

the lottery of immortality, which I have referred to casually above, and setting aside also the chances and changes from which even immortality is not exempt, who on the whole are most likely to live anew in the affectionate thoughts of those who never so much as saw them in the flesh, and know not even their names? There is a *musus*, a straining in the dull dumb economy of things, in virtue of which some, whether they will it and know it or no, are more likely to live after death than others, and who are these? Those who aimed at it as by some great thing that they would do to make them famous? Those who have lived most in themselves and for themselves, or those who have been most ensouled consciously, but perhaps better unconsciously, directly but more often indirectly, by the most living souls past and present that have flitted near them? Can we think of a man or woman who grips us firmly, at the thought of whom we kindle when we are alone in our honest daw's plumes, with none to admire or shrug his shoulders, can we think of one such, the secret of whose power does not lie in the charm of his or her personality—that is to say, in the wideness of his or her sympathy with, and therefore life in and communion with other people? In the wreckage that comes ashore from the sea of time there is much tinsel stuff that we must preserve and study if we would know our own times and people; granted that many a dead charlatan lives long and enters largely and necessarily into our own lives; we use them and throw them away when we have done with them. I do not speak of these, I do not speak of the Virgils and Alexander Popes, and who can say how many more whose names I dare not mention for fear of offending. They are as stuffed birds or beasts in a museum; serviceable, no doubt, from a scientific standpoint, but with no vivid or vivifying hold upon us. They seem to be alive, but are not. I am speaking of those who do actually live in us, and move us to higher achievements though they be long dead, whose life thrusts out our own and overrides it. I speak of those who draw us ever more towards them from youth to age, and to think of whom

is to feel at once that we are in the hands of those we love, and whom we would most wish to resemble. What is the secret of the hold that these people have upon us? Is it not that while, conventionally speaking, alive, they most merged their lives in, and were in fullest communion with those among whom they lived? They found their lives in losing them. We never love the memory of anyone unless we feel that he or she was himself or herself a lover.

I have seen it urged again, in querulous accents, that the so-called immortality even of the most immortal is not for ever. I see a passage to this effect in a book that is making a stir as I write. I will quote it. The writer says:—

'So, it seems to me, is the immortality we so glibly predicate of departed artists. If they survive at all, it is but a shadowy life they live, moving on through the gradations of slow decay to distant but inevitable death. They can no longer, as heretofore, speak directly to the hearts of their fellow-men, evoking their tears or laughter, and all the pleasures, be they sad or merry, of which imagination holds the secret. Driven from the market-place they become first the companions of the student, then the victims of the specialist. He who would still hold familiar intercourse with them must train himself to penetrate the veil which in ever-thickening folds conceals them from the ordinary gaze; he must catch the tone of a vanished society, he must move in a circle of alien associations, he must think in a language not his own.'

This is crying for the moon, or rather pretending to cry for it, for the writer is obviously insincere. I see the *Saturday Review* says the passage I have just quoted 'reaches almost to poetry,' and indeed I find many blank verses in it, some of them very aggressive. No prose is free from an occasional blank verse, and a good writer will not go hunting over his work to rout them out, but nine or ten in little more than as many lines is indeed reaching too near to poetry for good prose. This, however, is a trifle, and might pass if the tone of the writer was not so obviously that of cheap

pessimism. I know not which is cheapest, pessimism or optimism. One forces lights, the other darks; both are equally untrue to good art, and equally sure of their effect with the groundlings. The one extenuates, the other sets down in malice. The first is the more amiable lie, but both are lies, and are known to be so by those who utter them. Talk about catching the tone of a vanished society to understand Rembrandt or Giovanni Bellini! It is nonsense—the folds do not thicken in front of these men; we understand them as well as those among whom they went about in the flesh, and perhaps better. Homer and Shakespeare speak to us probably far more effectually than they did to the men of their own time, and most likely we have them at their best. I cannot think that Shakespeare talked better than we hear him now in *Hamlet* or *Henry the Fourth*; like enough he would have been found a very disappointing person in a drawing room. People stamp themselves on their work; if they have not done so they are naught, if they have we have them; and for the most part, they stamp themselves deeper on their work than on their talk. No doubt Shakespeare and Handel will be one day clean forgotten, as though they had never been born. The world will in the end die; mortality therefore itself is not immortal, and when death dies the life of these men will die with it—but not sooner. It is enough that they should live within us and move us for many ages as they have and will. Such immortality, therefore, as some men and women are born to achieve, or have thrust upon them, is a practical if not a technical immortality, and he who would have more let him have nothing.

I see I have drifted into speaking rather of how to make the best of death than of life, but who can speak of life without his thoughts turning instantly to that which is beyond it? He or she who has made the best of the life after death has made the best of the life before it; who cares one straw for any such chances and changes as will commonly befall him here if he is upheld by the full and certain hope of everlasting life in the affections of those that shall come after? If the life after death is happy in the hearts of others, it matters

little how unhappy was the life before it.

And now I leave my subject, not without misgiving that I shall have disappointed you. But for the great attention which is being paid to the work from which I have quoted above, I should not have thought it well to insist on points with which you are, I doubt not, as fully impressed as I am: but that book weakens the sanctions of natural religion, and minimises the comfort which it affords us, while it does more to undermine than to support the foundations of what is commonly called belief. Therefore I was glad to embrace this opportunity of protesting. Otherwise I should not have been so serious on a matter that transcends all seriousness. Lord Beaconsfield cut it shorter with more effect. When asked to give a rule of life for the son of a friend he said, 'Do not let him try and find out who wrote the letters of Junius.' Pressed for further counsel, he added, 'Nor yet who was the man in the iron mask,'—and he would say no more. Don't bore people. And yet I am by no means sure that a good many people do not think themselves ill-used unless he who addresses them has thoroughly well bored them—especially if they have paid any money for hearing him. My great namesake said, 'Surely the pleasure is as great of being cheated as to cheat,' and great as the pleasure both of cheating and boring undoubtedly is, I believe he was right. So I remember a poem which came out some thirty years ago in *Punch*, about a young lady who went forth in quest to 'Some burden make or burden bear, but which she did not greatly care, oh Miserie.' So again, all the holy men and women who in the Middle Ages professed to have discovered how to make the best of life took care that being bored, if not cheated, should have a large place in their programme. Still there are limits, and I close not without fear that I may have exceeded them.

—SAMUEL BUTLER : *An Address delivered at the  
Somerville Club, Feb. 27, 1895*

## STEPHEN LEACOCK

(1869— )

### On the Need for a Quiet College

If somebody would give me about two dozen very old elm trees and about fifty acres of wooded ground and lawn—not too near anywhere and not too far from everywhere—I think I could set up a college that would put all the big universities of to-day in the shade. I am not saying that it would be better. But it would be different.

I would need a few buildings—but it doesn't take many—stone, if possible—and a belfry, and a clock. The clock wouldn't need to go ; it might be better if it didn't. I would want some books—a few thousand would do—and some apparatus. But it's amazing how little apparatus is needed for scientific work of the highest quality : in fact ' the higher the fewer.'

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Most of all I should need a set of professors. I would only need a dozen of them—but they'd have to be real ones ; disinterested men of learning, who didn't even know they were disinterested. And, mind you, these professors of mine wouldn't sit in ' offices ' dictating letters on ' cases ' to stenographers, and only leaving their offices to go to ' committees ' and ' conferences.' There would be no ' offices ' in my college and no ' committees,' and my professors would have no time for conferences, because the job they were on would need all eternity and would never be finished.

My professors would never be findable at any fixed place except when they were actually giving lectures. Men of thought have no business in an office. Learning runs away from ' committees.' There would be no

'check up' on the time of the professors; there would be no 'hire and fire,' or 'judge by results' or standards or norms of work for them: nor any fixed number of hours.

But on the other hand they would, if I got the ones I want, be well worth their apparent irresponsibility: and when they lectured each one would be, though he wouldn't know it, a magician—with such an interest and absorption that those who listened would catch the infection of it, and hurry from the lecture to the library, still warm with thought.

It must be understood that the work of professors is peculiar. Few professors, real ones, ever complete their work: what they give to the world is fragments. The rest remains. Their contribution must be added up, not measured singly. Every professor has his 'life work' and sometimes does it, and sometimes dies first.

I can recall—I say it by way of digression—one such who was working on Machiavelli. When I first met him he had worked fourteen years. He worked in a large room covered a foot deep with Machiavelli—notes, pamphlets, remains. I asked him—it seemed a simple question—what he thought of Machiavelli. He shook his head. He said it was too soon to form an opinion. Later—ten years later—he published his book, *Machiavelli*. One of the great continental reviews—of the really great ones; you and I never hear of them: they have a circulation of about 300—said his work was based on premature judgments. He was hurt, but he felt it was true. He had rushed into print too soon.

Another such devoted himself—he began years ago—to the history of the tariff. He began in a quiet lull of tariff changes when for three or four years public attention was elsewhere. He brought his work up to within a year or so of actual up-to-date completeness. Then the tariff began to move: two years later he was three years behind it. Presently, though he worked hard, he was five years behind it. The tariff moved quicker than he did. He has never

caught it. His only hope now is that the tariff will move back towards free trade, and meet him.

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Not that I mean to imply that my professors would be a pack of nuts or freaks. Not at all : their manners might be dreamy and their clothes untidy but they'd be—they'd have to be—the most eminent men in their subjects. To get them would be the main effort of the college : to coax them, buy them, if need be, to kidnap them. Nothing counts beside that. A college is made of men—not by the size of buildings, number of students and football records. But no trustees know this, or, at best, only catch a glimmer of it and lose it. Within a generation all the greatest books on the humanities would come from my college.

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The professors bring the students. The students bring, unsought, the benefactions. The thing feeds itself like a flame in straw. But it's the men that count. A college doesn't need students : it's the students that need the college.

After twenty years my college would stand all alone. There are little colleges now but they ape bigness. There are quiet colleges but they try to be noisy. There are colleges without big games but they boom little ones. Mine would seem the only one, because the chance is there, wide open, and no one takes it. After twenty years people will drive in motor cars to see my college : and won't be let in.

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Round such a college there must be no thought of money. Money ruins life : I mean to have to think of it, to take account of it, to know that it is there. Men apart from money—men in an army, men on an expedition of exploration, emerge to a new life. Money is gone. At times and places whole classes thus lift up—or partly : as in older countries like England the class called 'gentry' that once was. These people lived on land and money from the past—stolen, perhaps, five hundred years ago—and so thought no more of it.



They couldn't earn more, they didn't know how. They kept what they had, or dropped out, fell through a trestle bridge of social structure and were gone in the stream. This class, in Amercia, we never had. They grow rare everywhere. Perhaps we don't want them. But they had the good luck that in their lives money in the sense here meant, didn't enter. Certain money limits circumscribed their life, but from day to day they never thought of it. A cow in a pasture, a fairly generous pasture, doesn't know it's in. It thinks it's outside. So did they.

So I would have it in my college: students not rich and not poor—or not using their wealth and not feeling their poverty, an equality as unconscious as that where Evangeline lived.

Nor would their studies lead to, or aim at, or connect with wealth. The so-called practical studies are all astray. Real study, real learning must, for the individual, be quite valueless or it loses its value. The proper studies for my college are history and literature, and philosophy, and thought and poetry and speculation, in the pursuit of which each shall repeat the eager search, the unending quest, of the past. Looking for one thing he shall find another. Looking for ultimate truth, which is unfindable, they will learn at least to repudiate all that is false.

I leave out at one sweep great masses of stuff usually taught: all that goes under such a name as a university faculty of commerce. There is no such thing. The faculty of commerce is down at the docks, at Wall Street, in the steel mills. A 'degree' in commerce is a salary of ten thousand a year. Those who fail to pass, go to Atlanta—and stay there. Certain things in commerce are teachable—accountancy, corporate organization, and the principles of embezzlement. But that's not a university.

Out goes economics—except as speculation; not a thing to teach in instalments and propositions like geometry. You can't teach it. No one knows it. It's the riddle of the Sphinx. My graduates will be just nicely fitted to think about it when they come out.

A first-year girl studying economics is as wide of the mark as an old man studying cosmetics. The philosophical speculative analysis of our economic life is the highest study of all—next to the riddle of our existence. But to cut it into classes and credits is a parody. Out it goes.

Out—but to come back again—goes medicine. Medicine is a great reality : it belongs in a *school* not a college. My college fits people to study medicine—study it in crowded cities among gas-lights and ambulances and hospitals and human suffering—and keeps their souls alive while they do it. Then later, as trained men in the noblest profession in the world, the atmosphere of the college which they imbibed among my elm trees, grows about them again. The last word in cultivation is, and always has been, the cultivated 'medicine man'.

The engineers?—that's different. Theirs is the most 'manly' of all the professions—among water power and gold mines and throwing bridges half a mile at a throw. But it's a *school* that trains them, not a college. They go to my college but they don't like it. They say it's too damn dreamy. So they kick out of it into engineering. For a time they remember the Latin third declension. Presently they forget it. Doctors grow cultivated as they grow older. Engineers get rougher and rougher.

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What I mean is that our studies have drifted away, away from the single-minded absorption of learning. Our students of to-day live in a whirl and clatter of 'student activities'. They have, in any large college, at least a hundred organizations and societies. They are 'all up!' for this to-day and 'all out!' for that to-morrow. Life is a continuous rally! a rah, rah! a parade! They play no games: they use teams for that. But exercise, and air, is their life. They *root*, in an organized hysteria—a code of signals telling them what to feel. They root, they rush, they organize, they play politics, run newspapers—and when they

step from college into life, they fit it absolutely, having lived already.

No one is denying here what fine men and women college makes, physically and mentally alert. Any one of them could operate a lift the day he steps out of college.

But there's something wanting—do they *think*, or is there anything after all to think about?—and yet, surely, in the long run the world has lived on its speculative mind—or hasn't it?

Some who think, of course, there must be. You can't submerge humanity in two generations. But mostly, I believe, the little poets fade out on their first-year benches, and the wistful intelligence learns to say, 'Rah! Rah!' and is lost.

Not so in my college. There will be no newspaper, except a last week's paper from the back counties of New England. There will be no politics because there will be no offices to run for. My students will control nothing. The whole movement of student control is a mistake. They're so busy controlling that they're not students.

They shall play games all they want to, but as games, not as a profession, not as college advertising—and no gate receipts. Till only a few years ago the country that taught the world its games played them as apart from money—as far apart as sheer necessity allowed. If Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton (it wasn't really; it was won in Belgium), there was at least no stadium at two dollars a seat.

One asks, perhaps, about the endowments, about the benefactors of my ideal college. The benefactors are all dead: or at least they must act as if they were. Years ago on the prairies many authorities claimed that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. It may not have been true. But it is certainly true that the best college benefactor is a dead one. After all, the reward in the long run is his—those sculptured letters graven in the stone. 'To the greater glory of God and in memory of Johannes Smith'—that; in a college among

elm trees—that's worth a lifetime of gifts—given and given gladly. Such things should best be graven in Latin. In my college they will be—Latin and lots of it, all over the place, with the mystic conspiracy of pretence, the wholesome humbug, that those who see it know what it means. Latin lasts. English seems to alter every thousand years or so. It's like the tariff that I named above—too mobile for academic use.

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As with the benefactors, so with the managing trustees who look after the money and never lose it. Not dead, these, but very silent : solid men who don't need to talk and don't, but who can invest a million dollars over three depressions, and there it still is, like gold in a pot in the pyramids. You find them chiefly in New England—at least I seem to have seen them there more than anywhere else. They are at the head of huge investment businesses, so big that you never hear of them. Mostly, if they don't talk, it means that they are thinking where to place fifty million dollars. You see, they hate to break it.

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And women? The arrangements in my college for the women students, and the women's dormitories? Oh no—no, thank you. There aren't any women. Co-education is a wonderful thing for women : college girls under co-education leave college more fit to leave college than any others. College girls are better companions, better wives (as your own or as someone else's) than any others. It's the women who have made our college life the bright happy thing it is—too bright, too happy.

But men can't *study* when women are around. And it's not only the students. If I let the women in, they get round some of my dusty old professors, and marry them--and good-bye to Machiavelli, and the higher thought.

—STEPHEN LEACOCK : *Model Memoirs*.

## BERTRAND RUSSELL

(1872— )

### Western Civilization

To see one's own civilization in a true perspective is by no means easy. There are three obvious means to this end, namely travel, history, and anthropology, and what I shall have to say is suggested by all three ; but no one of the three is as great a help to objectivity as it appears to be. The traveller sees only what interests him ; for example, Marco Polo never noticed Chinese women's small feet. The historian arranges events in patterns derived from his pre-occupations : the decay of Rome has been variously ascribed to imperialism, Christianity, malaria, divorce, and immigration—the last two being the favourites in America with persons and politicians respectively. The anthropologist selects and interprets facts according to the prevailing prejudices of his day. What do we, who stay at home, know about the savage ? Rousseauites say he is noble, imperialists say he is cruel ; ecclesiastically minded anthropologists say he is a virtuous family man, while advocates of divorce law reform say he practises free love ; Sir James Fraser says he is always killing his god, while others say he is always engaged in initiation ceremonies. In short, the savage is an obliging fellow who does whatever is necessary for the anthropologist's theories. In spite of these drawbacks, travel, history, and anthropology are the best means, and we must make the most of them.

First of all, what is civilization ? Its first essential character, I should say, is *forethought*. This, indeed, is what mainly distinguishes men from brutes and adults from children. But *forethought* being a matter of degree, we can distinguish more or less civilized nations

and epochs according to the amount of it that they display. And forethought is capable of almost precise measurement. I will not say that the average forethought of a community is inversely proportional to the rate of interest, though this is a view which might be upheld. But we can say that the degree of forethought involved in any act is measured by three factors : present pain, future pleasure, and the length of the interval between them. That is to say, the forethought is obtained by dividing the present pain by the future pleasure and then multiplying by the interval of time between them. There is a difference between individual and collective forethought. In an aristocratic or plutocratic community, one man can endure the present pain while another enjoys the future pleasure. This makes collective forethought easier. All the characteristic works of industrialism exhibit a high degree of collective forethought in this sense : those who make railways, or harbours, or ships, are doing something of which the benefit is only reaped years later.

It is true that no one in the modern world shows as much forethought as the ancient Egyptians showed in embalming their dead, for this was done with a view to their resurrection after some 10,000 years. This brings me to another element which is essential to civilization, namely *knowledge*. Forethought based upon superstition cannot count as fully civilized, although it may bring habits of mind essential to the growth of true civilization. For instance, the Puritan habit of postponing pleasures to the next life undoubtedly facilitated the accumulation of capital required for industrialism. We may then define civilization as : *A manner of life due to the combination of knowledge and forethought.*

Civilization in this sense begins with agriculture and the domestication of ruminants. There was until fairly recent times a sharp separation between agricultural and pastoral peoples. We read in Genesis xli. 31—4, how the Israelites had to settle in the land of Goshen rather than in Egypt proper because the Egyptians

objected to pastoral pursuits : "And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, my brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me ; and the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle ; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you and shall say, What is your occupation ? That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers : that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen ; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." In the travels of M. Huc one finds a similar attitude of the Chinese towards the pastoral Mongols. On the whole, the agricultural type has always represented the higher civilization, and has had more to do with religion. But the flocks and herds of the patriarchs had a considerable influence upon Jewish religion, and thence upon Christianity. The story of Cain and Abel is a piece of propaganda intended to show that shepherds are more virtuous than ploughmen. Nevertheless, civilization rested mainly upon agriculture until quite modern times.

So far we have not considered anything that distinguishes Western civilization from that of other regions such as India, China, Japan, and Mexico. There was in fact very much less difference before the rise of science than there has come to be since. Science and industrialism are nowadays the distinctive marks of Western civilization ; but I wish first to consider what our civilization was before the Industrial Revolution.

If we go back to the origins of Western civilization, we find that what it has derived from Egypt and Babylonia is, in the main, characteristic of all civilizations and not specially distinctive of the West. The distinctive Western character begins with the Greeks, who invented the habit of deductive reasoning and the science of geometry. Their other merits were either **not distinctive** or lost in the Dark Ages. In literature

and art they may have been supreme, but they did not differ very profoundly from various other ancient nations. In experimental science they produced a few men, notably Archimedes, who anticipated modern methods, but these men did not succeed in establishing a school or a tradition. The one prominent distinctive contribution of the Greeks to civilization was deductive reasoning and pure mathematics.

The Greeks, however, were politically incompetent, and their contribution to civilization would probably have been lost but for the government capacity of the Romans. The Romans discovered how to carry on the government of a great empire by means of a civil service and a body of law. In previous empires everything had depended upon the vigour of the monarch, but in the Roman Empire the emperor could be murdered by the Praetorian Guards and the empire put up to auction with very little disturbance of the governmental machine—almost as little, in fact, as is now involved in a general election. The Romans seem to have invented the virtue of devotion to the impersonal State as opposed to loyalty to the person of the ruler. The Greeks, it is true, talked of patriotism, but their politicians were corrupt, and almost all of them at some period of their career accepted bribes from Persia. The Roman conception of devotion to the State has been an essential element in the production of stable government in the West.

One thing more was necessary to complete Western civilization as it existed before modern times, and that was the peculiar relation between government and religion which came through Christianity. Christianity was originally quite non-political, since it grew up in the Roman Empire as a consolation to those who had lost national and personal liberty; and it took over from Judaism an attitude of moral condemnation towards the rulers of the world. In the years before Constantine, Christianity developed an organization to which the Christian owed a loyalty even greater than that which he owed to the State. When Rome



fell, the Church preserved in a singular synthesis what had proved most vital in the civilizations of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans. From Jewish moral fervour came the ethical precepts of Christianity; from the Greek love of deductive reasoning came theology; from the example of Roman imperialism and jurisprudence came the centralized government of the Church and the body of Canon Law.

Although these elements of a high civilization were, in a sense, preserved throughout the Middle Ages, they remained for a long time more or less latent. And Western civilization was not in fact the best in existence at that time : both the Mohammedans and the Chinese were superior to the West. Why the West should have started upon such a rapid upward course is, I think, to a very great extent a mystery. It is customary in our age to find economic causes for everything, but explanations based upon this practice tend to be unduly facile. Economic causes alone will not, for example, explain the decay of Spain, which is attributable rather to intolerance and stupidity. Nor will economic causes explain the rise of science. The general rule is that civilizations decay except when they come in contact with an alien civilization superior to their own. There have been only a few very rare periods in human history, and a few very sparse regions, in which spontaneous progress has occurred. There must have been spontaneous progress in Egypt and Babylonia when they developed writing and agriculture ; there was spontaneous progress in Greece for about 200 years ; and there has been spontaneous progress in Western Europe since the renaissance. But I do not think there has been anything in the general social conditions at these periods and places to distinguish them from various other periods and places in which no progress has occurred. I cannot escape from the conclusion that the great ages of progress have depended upon a small number of individuals of transcendent ability. Various social and political conditions were of course *necessary* for their effectiveness, but

*not sufficient*, for the conditions have often existed without the individuals, and in such cases progress has not occurred. If Kepler, Galileo, and Newton had died in infancy, the world in which we live would be vastly less different than it is from the world of the sixteenth century. This carries with it the moral that we cannot regard progress as assured ; if the supply of eminent individuals should happen to fail, we should no doubt lapse into a condition of Byzantine immobility.

There is one thing of great importance that we owe to the Middle Ages, and that is representative government. This institution is important because it has for the first time made it possible that the government of a large empire should appear to the governed to have been chosen by themselves. Where this system succeeds it produces a very high degree of political stability. It has, however, become evident in recent times that representative government is not a panacea applicable to all parts of the earth's surface. Indeed its success seems to be mainly confined to the English-speaking nations and the French.

Political cohesion by one means or another has, nevertheless, become the distinctive mark of Western civilization as opposed to the civilizations of other regions. This is mainly due to patriotism, which, although it has its roots in Jewish particularism and Roman devotion to the State, is a very modern growth, beginning with the English resistance to the Armada, and finding its first literary expression in Shakespeare. Political cohesion based mainly upon patriotism has been increasing steadily in the West ever since the end of the wars of religion, and is still increasing rapidly. In this respect Japan has proved an extraordinarily apt pupil. In old Japan there were turbulent feudal barons, analogous to those who infested England during the Wars of the Roses. But by the help of firearms and gunpowder, which were brought to Japan by the ships that brought the Christian missionaries, the Shogun established internal peace ; and since 1868, by means of education and the Shinto religion, the

Japanese Government has succeeded in producing a nation as homogeneous and resolute and united as any nation of the West.

The greater degree of social cohesion of the modern world is very largely due to changes in the art of war, all of which, from the invention of gunpowder onwards, have tended to increase the power of Governments. This process is probably by no means ended, but it has become complicated by a new factor; as armed forces become increasingly dependent upon industrial workers for their munitions, it becomes increasingly necessary for Governments to secure the support of large sections of the population. This is a matter belonging to the technique of propaganda, in which it may be assumed that Governments will make rapid progress in the near future.

The history of the last four hundred years in Europe has been one of simultaneous growth and decay: decay of the old synthesis represented by the Catholic Church, and growth of a new synthesis, as yet very incomplete, based hitherto on patriotism and science. It cannot be assumed that a scientific civilization transplanted to regions that have not our antecedents will have the same features that it has among us. Science grafted upon Christianity and democracy may produce effects entirely different from those that it produces when grafted upon ancestor worship and absolute monarchy. We owe to Christianity a certain respect for the individual, but this is a feeling towards which science is entirely neutral. Science of itself does not offer us any moral ideas, and it is doubtful what moral ideas are going to replace those that we owe to tradition. Tradition changes slowly, and our moral ideas are still in the main those that were appropriate to a pre-industrial regime; but it cannot be expected that this will continue to be the case. Gradually men will come to have thoughts that will be in conformity with their physical habits, and ideals not inconsistent with their industrial technique. The rate of change in ways of life has become very much more rapid than

in any previous period, the world has changed more in the last one hundred and fifty years than in the previous four thousand. If Peter the Great could have had a conversation with Hammurabi they would have understood each other fairly well; but neither of them could have understood a modern financial or industrial magnate. It is a curious fact that the new ideas of modern times have almost all been technical or scientific. Science has only lately begun to foster the growth of new moral ideas, through the liberation of benevolence from the shackles of superstitious ethical beliefs. Wherever a conventional code prescribes the infliction of suffering (e.g., in the prohibition of birth control), a kindlier ethic is thought to be immoral; consequently those who allow knowledge to influence their ethics are held by the apostles of ignorance to be wicked. It is, however, very doubtful whether a civilization so dependent upon science as ours is can, in the long run, successfully prohibit forms of knowledge which are capable of greatly increasing human happiness.

The fact is that our traditional moral ideas are either purely individualistic, like the idea of personal holiness, or adapted to much smaller groups than those that are important in the modern world. One of the most noteworthy effects of modern technique upon social life has been the greater degree to which men's activities are organized into large groups, so that a man's acts have often a great effect upon some quite remote set of men with whom a group to which he belongs has relations of co-operation or conflict. Small groups, such as the family, are diminishing in importance, and there is only one large group, namely the nation or the State, of which traditional morality takes any account. The result is that the effective religion of our age, in so far as it is not *merely* traditional, consists of patriotism. The average man is willing to sacrifice his life to patriotism, and feels his moral obligation so imperative that no revolt appears to him possible.

It seems not improbable that the movement

towards individual liberty which characterized the whole period from the renaissance to nineteenth-century liberalism may be brought to a stop by the increased organization due to industrialism. The pressure of society upon the individual may in a new form, become as great as in barbarous communities, and nations may come increasingly to pride themselves upon collective rather than individual achievements. This is already the case in the United States: men are proud of skyscrapers, railway stations, and bridges, rather than of poets, artists, or men of science. The same attitude pervades the philosophy of the Soviet Government. It is true that, in both countries, a desire for individual heroes persists: in Russia, personal distinction belongs to Lenin; in America, to athletes, pugilists, and movie stars. But in both cases the heroes are either dead or trivial, and the serious work of the present is not thus associated with the names of eminent individuals.

It is an interesting speculation to consider whether anything of high value can be produced by collective rather than individual effort, and whether such a civilization can be of the highest quality. I do not think this question can be answered off-hand. It is possible that, both in matters of art and in matters of the intellect, better results will be achieved co-operatively than have in the past been achieved by individuals. In science, there is already a tendency for work to be associated with a laboratory rather than a single person, and it would probably be good for science if this tendency became more marked, since it would promote co-operation. But if important work of whatever sort, is to be collective, there will of necessity be a certain curtailment of the individual: he will no longer be able to be so self-assertive as men of genius have usually been hitherto. Christian morality enters into this problem, but in an opposite sense to that usually supposed. It is generally thought that, because Christianity urges altruism and love of one's neighbour, it is anti-individualistic. This, however,

is a psychological error. Christianity appeals to the individual soul, and emphasizes personal salvation. What a man does for his neighbour, he has to do because that is what it is right for *him* to do, not because he is *instinctively* part of a larger group. Christianity in its origin, and still in its essence, is not palitical or even familial, and tends accordingly to make the individual more self-contained than nature made him. In the past, the family acted as a corrective to this individualism, but the family is decaying, and has not the hold over men's instincts that it used to have. What the family has lost, the nation has gained, for the appeal of the nation is to biological instincts which find little scope in an industrial world. From the point of view of stability, however, the nation is too narrow a unit. One could wish that men's biological instincts would apply themselves to the human race, but this seems hardly feasible psychologically, unless mankind as a whole is threatened by some grave external danger, such as a new disease or universal famine. These things being unlikely, I do not see any psychological mechanism by which world government could be brought about, except the conquest of the whole world by some one nation or group of nations. This does seem to be quite in the natural line of development, and may perhaps come about during the next one or two hundred years. In Western civilisation, such as it is now, science and industrial technique have much more importance than all the traditional factors put together. And it must not be supposed that the effect of these novelties upon human life has developed to anything like its full extent : things move more quickly now than they did in past ages, but they do not move so quickly as all that. The last event in human development comparable in importance to the growth of industrialism was the invention of agriculture, and agriculture took many thousands of years to spread over the earth's surface carrying with it, as it spread, a system of ideas and a way of life. The agricultural way of life has not even yet wholly conquered the aristocracies of the world, which with characteristic conservatism, have remained largely

## WESTERN CIVILIZATION

in the hunting stage, as is evidenced by our game laws. Similarly, we may expect the agricultural outlook to survive for many ages in backward countries and in backward sections of the population.

But it is not this outlook that is distinctive of Western civilisation, or of the offspring to which it is giving birth in the East. In America one finds even agriculture associated with a semi-industrial mentality, because America has not an indigenous peasantry. In Russia and China, the government has an industrial outlook, but has to contend with a vast population of ignorant peasants. In this connection, however, it is important to remember that a population which cannot read or write can be more quickly transformed by government action than a population such as one finds in Western Europe or America. By producing literacy and supplying the right kind of propaganda, the State can lead the rising generation to despise its elders to an extent which would astonish the most advanced American flapper; and thus a very complete change of mentality can be brought about within a generation. In Russia this process is in full swing: in China it is beginning. These two countries may therefore be expected to develop an unadulterated industrial mentality freed from these traditional elements which have survived in the more slowly developing West.

Western civilization has changed and is changing with such rapidity that many who feel an affection for its past find themselves living in what seems an alien world. But the present is only bringing out more clearly elements which have been present at any rate since Roman times, and which have always distinguished Europe from India and China. Energy, intolerance, and abstract intellect have distinguished the best ages in Europe from the best ages in the East. In literature and art, the Greeks may have been supreme, but their superiority to China is only a matter of degree. Of energy and intelligence I have already said enough; but of intolerance it is necessary to say something, since it has been a more persistent characteristic of Europe than

many people realize.

The Greeks, it is true, were less addicted to this vice than their successors. Yet they put Socrates to death; and Plato in spite of his admiration for Socrates, held that the State should teach a religion which he himself regarded as false, and that men should be persecuted for throwing doubt upon it. Confucians, Taoists, and Buddhists would not have sanctioned such a Hitlerite doctrine. Plato's gentlemanly elegance was not typically European; Europe has been warlike and clever, rather than urbane. The distinctive note of Western civilization is rather to be found in Plutarch's account of the defence of Syracuse by mechanical contrivances invented by Archimedes.

One source of persecution, namely democratic envy, was well developed among the Greeks. Aristides was ostracized because his reputation for justice was annoying. Heraclitus of Ephesus, who was not a democrat, exclaimed: "The Ephesians would do well to hang themselves, every grown man of them, and leave the city to beardless lads; for they have cast out Hermodorus, the best man among them, saying, 'We will have none who is best among us; if there be any such, let him be so elsewhere and among others.'" Many of the unpleasant features of our age existed among the Greeks. They had fascism, nationalism, militarism, communism, bosses and corrupt politicians, they had pugnacious vulgarity and some religious persecution. They had good individuals, but so have we; then, as now, a considerable percentage of the best individuals suffered exile, imprisonment, or death. Greek civilization had, it is true, one very real superiority to ours, namely the inefficiency of the police, which enabled a larger proportion of decent people to escape.

It was the conversion of Constantine to Christianity that first gave occasion for the full expression of those persecuting impulses by which Europe has distinguished itself from Asia. During the last hundred and fifty years, it is true, there has been a brief interval of liberalism, but now the white races are reverting to the theological bigotry which the Christians took over from



the Jews. The Jews first invented the notion that only one religion could be true, but they had no wish to convert all the world to it, and therefore only persecuted other Jews. The Christians retaining the Judaic belief in a special revelation, added to it the Roman desire for worldwide dominion and the Greek taste of metaphysical subtleties. The combination produced the most fiercely persecuting religion that the world has yet known. In Japan and China, Buddhism was peaceably accepted and allowed to exist along with Shinto and Confucianism; in the Mohammedan world, Christians and Jews were not molested so long as they paid the tribute; but throughout Christendom death was the usual penalty for even the smallest deviation from orthodoxy.

With those who dislike the intolerance of Fascism and Communism I have no disagreement, unless they regard it as a departure from European tradition. Those of us who feel stifled in an atmosphere of persecuting governmental orthodoxy would have fared little better in most previous ages of Europe than in modern Russia or Germany. If we could be transported into the past by magic, should we find Sparta an improvement on those modern countries? Should we have liked to live in societies which like those of Europe in the sixteenth century, put men to death for not believing in the occurrence of witchcraft? Could we have endured early New England or admired Pizarro's treatment of the Incas? Should we have enjoyed Renaissance Germany, where 100,000 witches were burnt in a century? Should we have liked eighteenth-century America, where leading Boston divines attributed earthquakes in Massachusetts to the impiety of lightning-rods? In the nineteenth century, should we have sympathized with Pope Pius IX when he refused to have anything to do with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals on the ground that it is heretical to believe that man has any duties to the lower animals? I am afraid Europe, however intelligent, has always been rather horrid, except in the brief period between 1848 and 1914. Now, unfortunately, Europeans are reverting to type.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL: *In Praise of Idleness.*

## LYTTON STRACHEY

(1880—1932)

### Voltaire

BETWEEN the collapse of the Roman Empire and the Industrial Revolution three men were the intellectual masters of Europe—Bernard of Clairvaux, Erasmus, and Voltaire. In Bernard the piety and the superstition of the Middle Ages attained their supreme embodiment; in Erasmus the learning and the humanity of the Renaissance. But Erasmus was a tragic figure. The great revolution in the human mind, of which he had been the presiding genius, ended in failure; he lived to see the tide of barbarism rising once more over the world; and it was left to Voltaire to carry off the final victory. By a curious irony, the Renaissance contained within itself the seeds of its ruin. That very enlightenment which seemed to be leading the way to the unlimited progress of the race involved Europe in the internecine struggles of nationalism and religion. England alone, by a series of accidents, of which the complexion of Anne Boleyn, a storm in the Channel, and the character of Charles I were the most important, escaped disaster. There the spirit of Reason found for itself a not too precarious home; and by the beginning of the eighteenth century a civilization had been evolved which, in essentials, was not very far distant from the great ideals of the Renaissance. In the meantime the rest of Europe had relapsed into mediævalism. If Bernard of Clairvaux had returned to life at the end of the seventeenth century, he would have been perfectly at home at Madrid, and not at all uncomfortable at Versailles. At last, in France, the beginnings of a change became discernible. The incompetence of Louis XIV's government threw discredit upon the principles of bigotry and obscurantism; with the death of the old King

there was a reaction among thinking men towards scepticism and toleration; and the movement was set on foot which ended, seventy-five years later, in the French Revolution. Of this movement Voltaire was the master spirit. For a generation he was the commander-in-chief in the great war against mediævalism. Eventually, by virtue of his extraordinary literary skill, his incredible energy, and his tremendous force of character, he dominated Europe, and the victory was won. The upheaval which followed, though it was perhaps inevitable, would certainly not have pleased him; but the violence of the French Revolution and its disastrous consequences were evils of small magnitude compared with the new and terrible complication in which, at the very same moment, mankind became involved. The ironical Fates were at work again. By a strange chance, no sooner was mediævalism dead than industrialism was born. The mechanical ingenuity of a young man in Glasgow plunged the world into a whole series of enormous and utterly unexpected difficulties, which are still clamouring to be solved. Thus the progress which the Renaissance had envisioned, and which had seemed assured at the end of the eighteenth century, was once more side-tracked. Yet the work of Voltaire was not undone. Short of some overwhelming catastrophe, the doctrine which he preached—that life should be ruled, not by the dictates of tyranny and superstition, but by those of reason and humanity—can never be obliterated from the minds of men.

Voltaire's personal history was quite as remarkable as his public achievement. Sense and sensibility were the two qualities which formed the woof and the warp of his life. Good sense was the basis of his being—that supreme good sense which shows itself not only in taste and judgment, but in every field of activity—in an agile adaptation of means to ends, in an unerring acumen in the practical affairs of the world; and Voltaire would probably have become a great lawyer, or possibly a great statesman, had not his fundamental characteristic of his been shot through and through

by a vehement sensitiveness—a nervous susceptibility of amazing intensity, which impregnated his solidity with a fierce electric fluid, and made him an artist, an egotist, a delirious enthusiast, dancing, screaming, and gesticulating to the last moment of an extreme old age. This latter quality was no doubt largely the product of physical causes—of an overstrung nervous system and a highly capricious digestion. He was in fact an excellent example of his own theory, propounded when he was over eighty in the delicious *Les Oreilles de Comtede Chesterfield* that the prime factor in the world's history has always been *la chaise percée*. So constituted, it was almost inevitable that he should take to the profession of letters—the obvious career for a lively and intelligent young man—and, in particular, that he should write tragedies, the tragedy holding in those days the place of the novel in our own. Naturally he was precocious; and by the time he was thirty he was a successful dramatist and a fashionable poet, enjoying a royal pension and the flattering attentions of high society. Then there was a catastrophe which changed his whole life. He quarrelled with the Chevalier de Rohan, was beaten by hired roughs, found himself ridiculed and cut by his fine friends, and finally shut up in the Bastille. This was the first of a long chain of circumstances which ultimately made him the champion of liberty in Europe. But for the Chevalier de Rohan he might have been engulfed in the successes and pleasures of the capital. The *coups de baton* suddenly made him serious: never again was he satisfied with the state of the world.

The importance of his English exile, which followed, has usually been exaggerated. Voltaire did not need to learn infidelity from the English deists, and he never did learn very much about English political institutions. England was not a cause, but a symbol of his discontent. His book upon the subject was his first definite declaration of war upon the old *regime*, and it was burnt accordingly by the common hangman. It might have been supposed that his course was now clear, that he was embarked, once and for all, on a career of struggle and

propaganda. But this was not the case. Circumstance intervened once more, in the shape of the eccentric and terrific Madame du Châtelet, who carried him off to her remote country house and kept him there for fifteen years engaged on scientific experiments. This long period, which filled the middle years of his life (from forty to fifty-five), though it seems at first sight to have been almost wasted, was in reality a blessing in disguise, for it gave him what was absolutely essential for his future work—a European reputation. When Madame du Châtelet, died (at exactly the right moment), Voltaire was recognised not merely as the greatest living dramatist and poet, and as a brilliant exponent of new ideas, but as a man of encyclopædic knowledge, whose claim to rank as a solid and serious thinker it was impossible to dismiss. All that was needed to put the crown upon his celebrity was some piece of resoundingly personal *reclame*; and this was provided by the Berlin episode, with its splendid opening, its preposterous developments, its hectic climax, and its violent close.

At the age of sixty Voltaire was the most famous man in the world. Yet it is strange to think that his fame was founded on achievements that were almost entirely ephemeral, and that if he had died then he would be remembered now merely as an overrated poet and a very clever man. His first sixty years were in reality nothing but an apprenticeship for those that were to follow. Settled down at last at Ferney, on the borders of France and Switzerland, perfectly independent, with the large fortune which his business shrewdness had amassed for him, with his colossal reputation, and his pen, Voltaire began the work of his life. Apart from his personal prowess, most of the elements in the situation were favourable to him. The time was ripe; the new movement was like an engine which had slowly risen up a long and steep ascent, and was standing at the top, waiting for a master hand to propel it forward and downward with irresistible force. But there were two contingencies, either of which might at any moment have proved fatal. Everything depended upon Voltaire's

continuing at Ferney for a considerable time : it was clearly impossible to *écraser l'infame* in a year or so. Yet how many years could he count upon ? With his abominable health, he had very little reason to hope for a long old age. Nevertheless, a very long old age was granted him. Incredible as it seemed, he lived to be eighty-four, maintaining the whole vigour of his extraordinary vitality to the last second of his existence : for a quarter of a century he worked with his full power. The other danger lay in the curious fact that he himself never quite realised the strength of his position. In his restless egotism he was perpetually trying to get leave to return to Paris ; and if he had succeeded the greater part of his influence would almost certainly have disappeared. At Ferney he was his own master ; he was safe from the intrigues of the capital : and his remoteness invested him and everything about him with the mysterious grandeur of a myth. If the authorities had had the slightest foresight, they would have welcomed him with open arms to Paris where his time would have been wasted in society, where his quarrelsomeness would have landed him sooner or later in some dreadful mess, where, inevitably, the " patriarch " would at last have vanished altogether in the very fallible old gentleman. It was the final strone of luck in an amazingly lucky life that Voltaire should have been saved from his own folly by the folly of his enemies.

The history of the years at Ferney is written at large in that gigantic correspondence which forms one of the most impressive monuments of human energy known to the world. Besides the vast body of facts which it contains, besides the day-to-day record of a moving and memorable struggle, besides the exquisite beauty, the æsthetic perfection, of its form, there emerges from it, with peculiar distinctness, the vision of a human spirit. It cannot be said that that vision is altogether a pleasing one. There is a natural tendency—visible in England, perhaps, especially—towards the elegant embellishment of great men ; and Voltaire has not escaped the process. In Miss Tallentyre's translation, for instance, of a sm all

selection from his letters, with an introduction and notes, Voltaire is presented to us as a kindly, gentle, respectable personage, a tolerant, broad-minded author, who ended his life as a country gentleman much interested in the drama and social reform. Such a picture would be merely ridiculous, if it were not calculated to mislead. The fact that Voltaire devoted his life to one of the noblest of causes must not blind us to another fact—that he was personally a very ugly customer. He was a frantic, desperate fighter, to whom all means were excusable; he was a trickster, a rogue; he lied, he blasphemed, and he was extremely indecent. He was, too, quite devoid of dignity, adopting, whenever he saw fit, the wildest expedients and the most extravagant postures: there was, in fact, a strong element of farce in his character, which he had the wit to exploit for his own ends. At the same time he was inordinately vain, and mercilessly revengeful; he was as mischievous as a monkey, and as cruel as a cat. At times one fancies him as a puppet on wires, a creature raving in a mechanical frenzy—and then one remembers that lucid, piercing intellect, that overwhelming passion for reason and liberty. The contradiction is strange; but the world is full of strange contradictions; and, on the whole, it is more interesting, and also wiser, to face them than to hush them up.

—LYTTON STRACHY: *Characters and Commentaries*.

## ALDOUS HUXLEY

(1894— )

### Words and Behaviour

WORDS form the thread on which we string our experiences. Without them we should live spasmodically and intermittently. Hatred itself is not so strong that animals will not forget it, if distracted, even in the presence of the enemy. Watch a pair of cats, crouching on the brink of a fight. Balefully the eyes glare; from far down in the throat of each come bursts of a strange, strangled noise of defiance: as though animated by a life of their own, the tails twitch and tremble. What aimed intensity of loathing! Another moment and surely there must be an explosion. But no; all of a sudden one of the two creatures turns away, hoists a hind leg in a more than fascist salute and, with the same fixed and focussed attention as it had given a moment before to his enemy, begins to make a lingual toilet. Animal love is as much at the mercy of distractions as animal hatred. The dumb creation lives a life made up of discrete and mutually irrelevant episodes. Such as it is, the consistency of human characters is due to the words upon which all human experiences are strung. We are purposeful because we can describe our feeling in rememberable words, can justify and rationalize our desires in terms of some kind of argument. Faced by an enemy we do not allow an itch to distract us from our emotions; the mere word 'enemy' is enough to keep us reminded of our hatred to convince us that we do well to be angry. Similarly the word 'love' bridges for us those chasms of momentary indifference and boredom which gape from time to time between even the most ardent lovers. Feeling and desire provide us with our motive power; words give continuity to what we do and to a considerable extent determine our direction. Inappropriate and badly chosen



words vitiate thought and lead to wrong or foolish conduct. Most ignorances are vincible, and in the greater number of cases stupidity is what the Buddha pronounced it to be, a sin. For, consciously or sub-consciously, it is with deliberation that we do not know or fail to understand—because incomprehension allows us, with a good conscience, to evade unpleasant obligations and responsibilities, because ignorance is the best excuse for going on doing what one likes, but ought not, to do. Our egotisms are incessantly fighting to preserve themselves, not only from external enemies, but also from the assaults of the other and better self with which they are so uncomfortably associated. Ignorance is egotism's most effective defence against that Dr Jekyll in us who desires perfection; stupidity its subtlest stratagem. If, as so often happens, we choose to give continuity to our experience by means of words which falsify the facts, this is because the falsification is somehow to our advantage as egotist.

Consider, for example, the case of war. War is enormously discreditable to those who order it to be waged and even to those who merely tolerate its existence. Furthermore to developed sensibilities the facts of war are revolting and horrifying. To falsify these facts, and by so doing to make war seem less evil than it really is, and our own responsibility in tolerating war less heavy, is doubly to our advantage. By suppressing and distorting the truth, we protect our sensibilities and preserve our self-esteem. Now, language is, among other things, a device which men use for suppressing and distorting the truth. Finding the reality of war too unpleasant to contemplate, we create a verbal alternative to that reality, parallel with it, but in quality quite different from it. That which we contemplate thenceforward is not that to which we react emotionally and upon which we pass moral judgments, is not war as it is in fact, but the fiction of war as it exists in our pleasantly falsifying verbiage. Our stupidity in using inappropriate language turns out, on analysis, to be the most refined cunning.

The most shocking fact about war is that its victims and its instruments are individual human beings, and that these individual human beings are condemned by the monstrous conventions of politics to murder or be murdered in quarrels not their own, to inflict upon the innocent and, innocent themselves of any crime against their enemies, to suffer cruelties of every kind.

The language of strategy and politics is designed, so far as it is possible, to conceal this fact, to make it appear as though wars were not fought by individuals drilled to murder one another in cold blood and without provocation, but either by impersonal and therefore wholly non-moral and impassible forces, or else by personified abstractions.

Here are a few examples of the first kind of falsification. In place of 'cavalrymen' or 'footsoldiers' military writers like to speak of 'sabres' and 'rifles.' Here is a sentence from a description of the Battle of Marengo : 'According to Victor's report, the French retreat was orderly ; it is certain, at any rate, that the regiments held together, for the six thousand Austrian sabres found no opportunity to charge home.' The battle is between sabres in line and muskets in echelon—a mere clash of ironmongery.

On other occasions there is no question of anything so vulgarly material as ironmongery. The battles are between Platonic ideas, between the abstractions of physics and mathematics. Forces interact ; weights are flung into scales ; masses are set in motion. Or else it is all a matter of geometry. Lines swing and sweep ; are protracted or curved ; pivot on a fixed point.

Alternatively the combatants are personal, in the sense that they are personifications. There is the 'enemy', in the singular, making 'his' plans, striking 'his' blows. The attribution of personal characteristics to collectivities, to geographical expressions, to institutions, is a source, as we shall see, of endless confusions in political thought, of innumerable political mistakes and crimes. Personification in politics is an error which we make because it is to our advantage as egotists to be able to

feel violently proud of our country and of ourselves as belonging to it, and to believe that all the misfortunes due to our own mistakes are really the work of the Foreigner. It is easier to feel violently towards a person than towards an abstraction; hence our habit of making political personifications. In some cases military personifications are merely special instances of political personifications. A particular collectivity, the army or the warring nation, is given the name and, along with the name, the attributes of a single person, in order that we may be able to love or hate it more intensely than we could do if we thought of it as what it really is: a number of diverse individuals. In other cases personification is used for the purpose of concealing the fundamental absurdity and monstrosity of war. What is absurd and monstrous about war is that men who have no personal quarrel should be trained to murder one another in cold blood. By personifying opposing armies or countries, we are able to think of war as a conflict between individuals. The same result is obtained by writing of war as though it were carried on exclusively by the generals in command and not by the private soldiers in their armies. ('*Rennenkampf* had pressed back von Schubert.') The implication in both cases is that war is indistinguishable from a bout of fisticuffs in a bar room. Whereas in reality it is profoundly different. A scrap between two individuals is forgivable; mass murder, deliberately organized, is a monstrous iniquity. We still choose to use war as an instrument of policy; and to comprehend the full wickedness and absurdity of war would therefore be inconvenient. For, once we understood, we should have to make some effort to get rid of the abominable thing. Accordingly, when we talk about war, we use a language which conceals or embellishes its reality. Ignoring the facts, so far as we possibly can, we imply that battles are not fought by soldiers, but by things, principles, allegories, personified collectivities, or (at the most human) by opposing commanders, pitched against one another in single combat. For the same reason, when we

have to describe the processes and the results of war, we employ a rich variety of euphemisms. Even the most violently patriotic and militaristic are reluctant to call a spade by its own name. To conceal their intentions even from themselves, they make use of picturesque metaphors. We find them, for example, clamouring for war planes numerous and powerful enough to go and 'destroy the hornets in their nests'—in other words, to go and throw thermite, high explosives and vesicants upon the inhabitants of neighbouring countries before they have time to come and do the same to us. And how reassuring is the language of historians and strategists! They write admiringly of those military geniuses who know 'when to strike at the enemy's line' (a single combatant deranges the geometrical constructions of a personification); when to 'turn his flank'; when to 'execute an enveloping movement.' As though they were engineers discussing the strength of materials and the distribution of stresses, they talk of abstract entities called 'man power' and 'fire power.' They sum up the long-drawn sufferings and atrocities of trench warfare in the phrase 'a war of attrition'; the massacre and mangling of human beings is assimilated to the grinding of a lens.

A dangerously abstract word, which figures in all discussions about war, is 'force.' Those who believe in organizing collective security by means of military pacts against a possible aggressor are particularly fond of this word. 'You cannot,' they say, 'have international justice unless you are prepared to impose it by force.' 'Peace-loving countries must unite to use force against aggressive dictatorships.' 'Democratic institutions must be protected, if need be, by force.' And so on.

Now, the word 'force,' when used in reference to human relations, has no single, definite meaning. There is the 'force' used by parents when without resort to any kind of physical violence, they compel their children to act or refrain from acting in some particular way. There is the 'force' used by attendants in an asylum when they try to prevent a maniac from hurting himself or others. There is the 'force' used by the police when

they control a crowd, and that other 'force' which they use in a baton charge. And finally there is the 'force' used in war. This, of course, varies with the technological devices at the disposal of the belligerents, with the policies they are pursuing, and with the particular circumstances of the war in question. But in general it may be said that, in war, 'force' connotes violence and fraud used to the limit of the combatants' capacity.

Variations in quantity, if sufficiently great, produce variations in quality. The 'force' that is war, particularly modern war, is very different from the 'force' that is police action, and the use of the same abstract word to describe the two dissimilar processes is profoundly misleading. (Still more misleading, of course, is the explicit assimilation of a war, waged by allied League-of-Nations powers against an aggressor, to police action against a criminal. The first is the use of violence and fraud without limit against innocent and guilty alike; the second is the use of strictly limited violence and a minimum of fraud exclusively against the guilty).

Reality is a succession of concrete and particular situations. When we think about such situations we should use the particular and concrete words which apply to them. If we use abstract words which apply equally well (and equally badly) to other, quite dissimilar situations, it is certain that we shall think incorrectly.

Let us take the sentences quite above and translate the abstract word 'force' into language that will render (however inadequately) the concrete and particular realities of contemporary warfare.

'You cannot have international justice, unless you are prepared to impose it by force.' Translated, this becomes: 'You cannot have international justice unless you are prepared, with a view to imposing a just settlement, to drop thermite, high explosives and vesicants upon the inhabitants of foreign cities and to have thermite, high explosives and vesicants dropped in return upon the inhabitants of your cities.' At the end of this proceeding, justice is to be imposed by the victorious

party—that is, if there is a victorious party. It should be remarked that justice was to have been imposed by the victorious party at the end of the last war. But, unfortunately, after four years of fighting, the temper of the victors was such that they were quite incapable of making a just settlement. The Allies are reaping in Nazi Germany what they sowed at Versailles. The victors of the next war will have undergone intensive bombardments with thermite, high explosives and vesicants. Will their temper be better than that of the Allies in 1918? Will they be in a fitter state to make just settlement? The answer, quite obviously, is: No. It is psychologically all but impossible that justice should be secured by the methods of contemporary warfare.

The next two sentences may be taken together. Peace-loving countries must unite to use force against aggressive dictatorships. Democratic institutions must be 'protected, if need be, by force.' Let us translate. 'Peace-loving countries must unite to throw thermite, high explosives and vesicants on the inhabitants of countries ruled by aggressive dictators. They must do this, and of course abide the consequences, in order to preserve peace and democratic institutions.' Two questions immediately propound themselves. First, is it likely that peace can be secured by a process calculated to reduce the orderly life of our complicated societies to chaos? And, second, is it likely that democratic institutions will flourish in a state of chaos? Again, the answers are pretty clearly in the negative.

By using the abstract word 'force', instead of terms which at least attempt to describe the realities of war as it is to-day, the preachers of collective security through military collaboration disguise from themselves and from others, not only the contemporary facts, but also the probable consequences of their favourite policy. The attempt to secure justice, peace and democracy by 'force' seems reasonable enough until we realize, first that this non-committal word stands, in the circumstances of our age, for activities which can hardly fail to result in social chaos; and second, that the consequences of

social chaos are injustice, chronic warfare and tyranny. The moment we think in concrete and particular terms of the concrete and particular process called 'modern war,' we see that a policy which worked (or at least didn't result in complete disaster) in the past has no prospect whatever of working in the immediate future. The attempt to secure justice, peace and democracy by means of a 'force,' which means, at this particular moment of history, thermite, high explosives and vesicants is about as reasonable as the attempt to put out a fire with a colourless liquid that happens to be, not water, but petrol.

What applies to the 'force' that is war applies in large measure to the 'force' that is revolution. It seems inherently very unlikely that social justice and social peace can be secured by thermite, high explosives and vesicants. At first, it may be, the parties in a civil war would hesitate to use such instruments on their fellow-countrymen. But there can be little doubt that, if the conflict were prolonged (as it probably would be between the evenly balanced Right and Left of a highly industrialized society), the combatants would end by losing their scruples.

The alternatives confronting us seem to be plain enough. Either we invent and conscientiously employ a new technique for making revolutions and settling international disputes; or else we cling to the old technique and, using 'force' (that is to say, thermite, high explosives and vesicants), destroy ourselves. Those who, for whatever motive, disguise the nature of the second alternative under inappropriate language, render the world a grave disservice. They lead us into one of the temptations we find it hardest to resist—the temptation to run away from reality, to pretend that facts are not what they are. Like Shelley (but without Shelley's acute awareness of what he was doing) we are perpetually weaving

A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun  
Of this familiar life.

We protect our minds by an elaborate system of

abstractions, ambiguities, metaphors and similes from the reality we do not wish to know too clearly ; we lie to ourselves, in order that we may still have the excuse of ignorance, the alibi of stupidity and incomprehension, possessing which we can continue with a good conscience to commit and tolerate the most monstrous crimes :

The poor wretch who had learned his only prayers  
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough  
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,  
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute  
And technical in victories and defeats,  
And all our dainty terms for fratricide ;  
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues  
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which  
We join no meaning and attach no form !  
As if the soldier died without a wound :  
As if the fibres of this godlike frame  
Were gored without a pang : as if the wretch  
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,  
Passed off to Heaven translated and not killed ;  
As though he had no wife to pine for him,  
No God to judge him.

The language we use about war is inappropriate, and its inappropriateness is designed to conceal a reality so odious that we do not wish to know it. The language we use about politics is also inappropriate ; but here our mistake has a different purpose. Our principal aim in this case is to arouse and, having aroused, to rationalize and justify such intrinsically agreeable sentiments as pride and hatred, self-esteem and contempt for others. To achieve this end we speak about the facts of politics in words which more or less completely misrepresent them.

The concrete realities of politics are individual human beings, living together in national groups. Politicians—and to some extent we are all politicians—substitute abstractions for these concrete realities, and having done this, proceed to invest each abstraction



with an appearance of concreteness by personifying it. For example, the concrete reality of which 'Britain' is the abstraction consists of some forty-odd millions of diverse individuals living on an island off the west coast of Europe. The personification of this abstraction appears, in classical fancy-dress and holding a very large toasting fork, on the backside of our copper coinage; appears in verbal form, every time we talk about international politics. 'Britain', the abstraction from forty millions of Britons, is endowed with thoughts, sensibilities and emotions, even with a sex—for, in spite of John Bull, the country is always a female.

Now, it is of course possible that 'Britain' is more than a mere name—is an entity that possesses some kind of reality distinct from that of the individuals constituting the group to which the name is applied. But this entity, if it exists, is certainly not a young lady with a toasting fork; nor is it possible to believe (though some eminent philosophers have preached the doctrine) that it should possess anything in the nature of personal will. One must agree with T. H. Green that 'there can be nothing in a nation, however exalted its mission, or in a society, however perfectly organized, which is not in the persons composing the nation or the society.....We cannot suppose a national spirit and will to exist except as the spirit and will of individuals'. But the moment we start resolutely thinking about our world in terms of individual person we find ourselves at the same time thinking in terms of universality. 'The great rational religions,' writes Professor Whitehead, 'are the outcome of the emergence of a religious consciousness that is universal, as distinguished from tribal, or even social. Because it is universal, it introduces the note of solitariness'. (And he might have added that, because it is solitary, it introduces the note of universality.) 'The reason of this connection between universality and solitude is that universality is a disconnection from immediate surroundings.' And conversely the disconnection from immediate surround-

ings, particularly such social surrounding as the tribe or nation, the insistence on the person as the fundamental reality, leads to the conception of an all-embracing unity.

A nation, then, may be more than a mere abstraction, may possess some kind of real existence apart from its constituent members. But there is no reason to suppose that it is a person; indeed, there is every reason to suppose that it isn't. Those who speak as though it were a person (and some go further than this and speak as though it were a personal god) do so, because it is to their interest as egotists to make precisely this mistake.

In the case of the ruling class these interests are in part material. The personification of the nation as a sacred being, different from and superior to its constituent members, is merely (I quote the words of a great French jurist, Leon Duguit) 'a way of imposing authority by making people believe it is an authority *de jure* and not merely *de facto*.' By habitually talking of the nation as though it were a person with thoughts, feelings and a will of its own, the rulers of a country legitimate their own powers. Personification leads easily to deification; and where the nation is deified, its government ceases to be a mere convenience, like drains or a telephone system, and, partaking in the sacredness of the entity it represents, claims to give orders by divine right and demands the unquestioning obedience due to a god. Rulers seldom find it hard to recognize their friends, Hegel, the man who elaborated an inappropriate figure of speech into a complete philosophy of politics, was a favourite of the Prussian government. '*Es ist*,' he had written, '*es ist der Gang Gottes in der Welt, das der Staat ist*.' The decoration bestowed on him by Frederick William III was richly deserved.

Unlike their rulers, the ruled have no material interest in using inappropriate language about states and nations. For them, the reward of being mistaken is psychological. The personified and deified nation be-

comes, in the minds of the individuals composing it, a kind of enlargement of themselves. The superhuman qualities which belong to the young lady with the toasting fork, the young lady with plaits and a brass *soutien-gorge*, the young lady in a Phrygian bonnet, are claimed by individual Englishmen, Germans and Frenchmen as being, at least in part, their own. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. But there would be no need to die, no need of war, if it had not been even sweeter to boast and swagger for one's country, to hate, despise, swindle and bully for it. Loyalty to the personified class or party, justifies the loyal in indulging all those passions which good manners and the moral code do not allow them to display in their relations with their neighbours. The personified entity is a being, not only great and noble, but also insanely proud, vain and touchy; fiercely rapacious; a braggart, bound by no considerations of right and wrong. (Hegel condemned as hopelessly shallow all those who dared to apply ethical standards to the activities of nations. To condone and applaud every iniquity committed in the name of the State was to him a sign of philosophical profundity.) Identifying themselves with this god, individuals find relief from the constraints of ordinary social decency, feel themselves justified in giving rein, within duly prescribed limits, to their criminal proclivities. As a loyal nationalist or party-man, one can enjoy the luxury of behaving badly with a good conscience.

The evil passions are further justified by another linguistic error—the error of speaking about certain categories of persons as though they were mere embodied abstractions. Foreigners and those who disagree with us are not thought of as men and women like ourselves and our fellow-countrymen; they are thought of as representatives and, so to say, symbols of a class. In so far as they have any personality at all, it is the personality we mistakenly attribute to their class—a personality that is, by definition, intrinsically evil. We know that the harming or killing of men and women is wrong, and we are reluctant consciously to do what we

know to be wrong. But when particular men and women are thought of merely as representatives of a class, which has previously been defined as evil and personified in the shape of a devil, then the reluctance to hurt or murder disappears. Brown, Jones and Robinson, are no longer thought of as Brown, Jones and Robinson, but as heretics, gentiles, Yids, niggers, barbarians, Huns, communists, capitalists, fascists, liberals—whichever the case may be. When they have been called such names and assimilated to the accursed class to which the names apply, Brown, Jones and Robinson cease to be conceived as what they really are—human persons—and become for the users of this fatally inappropriate language mere vermin or, worse, demons whom it is right and proper to destroy as thoroughly and as painfully as possible. Wherever persons are present, questions of morality arise. Rulers of nations and leaders of parties find morality embarrassing. That is why they take such pains to depersonalize their opponents. All propaganda directed against an opposing group has but one aim; to substitute diabolical abstractions for concrete persons. The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human. By robbing them of their personality, he puts them outside the pale of moral obligation. Mere symbols can have no rights—particularly when that of which they are symbolical is, by definition, evil.

Politics can become moral only on one condition: that its problems shall be spoken of and thought about exclusively in terms of concrete reality; that is to say, of persons. To depersonify human beings and to personify abstractions are complementary errors which lead, by an inexorable logic, to war between nations and to idolatrous worship of the State, with consequent governmental oppression. All current political thought is a mixture, in varying proportions, between thought in terms of concrete realities and thought in terms of depersonified symbols and personified abstractions. In the democratic countries the problems of

internal politics are thought about mainly in terms of concrete reality ; those of external politics, mainly in terms of abstractions and symbols. In dictatorial countries the proportion of concrete to abstract and symbolic thought is lower than in democratic countries. Dictators talk little of persons, much of personified abstractions, such as the Nation, the State, the Party, and much of depersonified symbols, such as Yids, Bolshies, Capitalists. The stupidity of politicians who talk about a world of persons as though it were not a world of persons is due in the main to self-interest. In a fictitious world of symbols and personified abstractions, rulers find that they can rule more effectively, and the ruled, that they can gratify instincts which the conventions of good manners and the imperatives of morality demand that they should repress. To think correctly is the condition of behaving well. It is also in itself a moral act ; those who would think correctly must resist considerable temptations.

—ALDOUS HUXLEY : *The Olive Tree*.

## ROSE MACAULAY

### Eating and Drinking

HERE is a wonderful and delightful thing, that we should have furnished ourselves with orifices, with traps that open and shut, through which to push and pour alien objects that give us such pleasurable, such delicious sensations, and at the same time sustain us. A simple pleasure ; a pleasure accessible, in normal circumstances and in varying degrees, to all, and that several times each day. An expensive pleasure, if calculated in the long run and over a lifetime ; but count the cost of each mouthful as it comes, and it is (naturally) cheaper. You can, for instance, get a delicious plate of spaghetti and cheese, or fried mushrooms and onions, for very little ; or practically anything else, except caviare, smoked salmon, the eggs of plovers, ostriches and humming-birds, and fauna and flora completely out of their appropriate seasons, which you will, of course, desire, but to indulge such desires is Gluttony, or Gule, against which the human race has always been warned. It was, of course, through Gule that our first parents fell. As the confessor of Gower's Amans told him, this vice of gluttony was in Paradise, most deplorably mistimed.

We shall never know what that fruit was, which so solicited the longing Eve, which smelt so savoury, which tasted so delightful as greedily she ignored it without restraint. The only fruit that has ever seemed to me to be worthy of the magnificently inebriating effects wrought by its consumption on both our parents is the mango. When I have eaten mangoes, I have felt like Eve.

*Satiate at length,  
And hightn'd as with Wine, jocond and boon,  
Thus to herself she pleasingly began.  
O sovran, vertuous, precious of all trees  
In Paradise, of operation blest.....*

And like both of them together :

*As with new Wine intoxicated both  
They swim in mirth, and fancies that they feel  
Divinie within them breeding wings  
Whereunto to scorn the Earth : but that false Fruit  
Fair other operation first displaunt.....*

And so on. But, waking up the morning after mangoes, one does not feel such ill-effects as was produced by that fallacious fruit when its exhilarating vapour bland had worn off. One feels, unless one has very grossly exceeded, satiate, happy and benign, turning sweet memories over on one's palate, desiring, for the present, no more of anything. The part of the soul (see *Timæus*) which desires meats and drinks lies torpid and replete by its manger, somewhere between midriff and navel, for there the gods housed these desires, that wild animal chained up with man, which must be nourished if man is to exist, but must not be allowed to disturb the council chamber, the seat of reason. For the authors of our race, said *Timæus*, were aware that we should be intemperate in eating and drinking, and take a good deal more than was necessary or proper, by reason of gluttony. Prescient and kindly authors of our race ! What a happy companion they allotted to mankind in this wild animal, whom I should rather call a domestic and pampered pet. How sweet it is to please it, to indulge it with delicious nourishment, with superfluous tit-bits and pretty little tiny kickshaws, with jellies, salads, dainty fowls and fishes, fruits and wines and pastries, fattened and entruffled livers of geese, sturgeon's eggs from Russia, salmon from the burn, omelettes and souffles from the kitchen. I have always thought the Glutton in *Piers Plowman* a coarse and unresourceful fellow, who, on his way to church and shrift, was beguiled merely by a breweress's offer of ale. (How ungenteel Mr. H. W. Fowler must have thought her, and all of her century and many later centuries, for using this word, which he so condemns, for beer !) The Glutton asked, which

she also any hot spices? and she assured him that she had pepper, paeony seeds, garlic, and fennel. And with this simple and unpleasing fare, Glutton was content, and made merry globbing it until night. Glutton was no gourmet, no Lucullus. Nothing recked he of rare and dainty dishes; nothing out of the ordinary entered his imagination. Not for him the witted lark, the artful sauce, the delicate salad of chopped herbs and frogs.

There are some sad facts concerning eating and drinking. One is that the best foods are unwholesome; an arrangement doubtless made by the authors of our being in order to circumvent gluttony. It is a melancholy discovery made early by infants, and repeatedly by adults. We all have to make it in turn, only excepting the ostrich. No doubt the Lady in Comus made it later, after she had more fully grown up, though as an adolescent we find her remarking, sententiously and erroneously, to the enticing sorcerer,

*And that which is not good is not delicious  
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.*

Even the untutored savage knows better than this. They of Dominica, and Antonio de Herrera, that elegant Castilian chronicler of Spanish travels in the West Indies, they of Dominica did eat, one day, a Friar, but he proved unwholesome, and all who partook were ill, and some died, and therefore they of Dominica have left eating human flesh. This was a triumph for Friars, which must be envied by many of the animal world.

Another sad come-tive truth is that the best foods are the products of infinite and wearying trouble. The trouble need not be taken by the consumer, but someone, ever since the Fall, has had to take it. Even raw fruit was, to the exiles from Eden, hard to come by.

*Their meanest sim, le cheer (says Sylvester)  
Our wretched parents bought full hard and dear.  
To get a Plum, sometimes poor Adam rushes  
With thousand wounds among a thousand bushes.  
If they desire a Medler for their food,  
They must goe seek it through a fearfull wood;*



*Or a brown Mulberry, then the ragged Bramble.  
With thousand scratches doth their skin bescrumble.*

And did they desire anything better, they could not have it at all. Slowly they learned, we suppose, about planting seeds and reaping ears and grinding flour and welding it into that heavy substance we call bread. Rather more quickly, perhaps, about the merits of dead animals as food, but how long it took them to appreciate the niceties of cooking these, we know not. That is to say, no doubt the students of the history of man know, but I do not.

Once learnt, this business of cooking was to prove an ever-growing burden. It scarcely bears thinking about, the time and labour that man and womankind has devoted to the preparation of dishes that are to melt and vanish in a moment like smoke or a dream, like a shadow, and as a post that hastes by, and the air closes behind them, and afterwards no sign where they went is to be found.

Still, one must keep one's head, and remember that some people voluntarily undertake these immense and ephemeral labours, for pay or for a noble love of art even at its most perishable, or from not being able to think of a way of avoiding it. All honour to these slaves of baked-meats : let them by all means apply themselves to their labours ; so long as those who do not desire to prepare food are not compelled to do so. If you are of these, and can get no one to cook for you in your home, you should eat mainly such objects as are sold in a form ready for the mouth, such as cheese, bread, butter, fruit, sweets, dough-nuts, macaroons, meringues, and everything that comes (if you have a tin-opener) out of tins. If you can endure to apply a very little and rudimentary trouble to the matter yourself, eggs are soon made ready, even by the foolish ; bacon also. I would not advise you to attempt real meat ; this should only be cooked by others ; so should potatoes.

But, whatever has been prepared for you, and whoever has had the ill chance to prepare it, there comes the exquisite moment when you push or pour it into the mouth. What bliss, to feel it rotating about the palate, being chewed (if this is required) by the teeth, slipping, in chewed state, down the throat, down the gullet, down the body to the manger, there to find its temporary home. Or, if it is liquid, to feel it gurgling and gushing, like the flood of life, quite down the throat with silver sound, running sweet ichor through the veins. Red wine, golden wine, pink wine, ginger beer (with gin or without), the juice of grape-fruit or orange, tea, coffee, chocolate, iced soda from the fountain, even egg nogg—how merrily and like to brooks they run !

My subject runs away with me : I could, had I but time and space, discourse on it for ever. I could mention the great, the magnificent gourmets of history ; I could dwell on the pleasures experienced by Lucullus, Heliogabalus, those Roman Emperors, those English monarchs, those Aldermen, who, having dined brilliantly and come to sad satiety, had their slaves tickle them with feathers behind the ears until this caused them to retire in haste from the table, to which they presently returned emptied and ready to work through the menu again. These are the world's great gluttons to whom eating and drinking was a high art.

But they are beaten by one Nicholas Wood, a yeoman of Kent, who, in the reign of James I, "did eat with ease a whole sheep of 16 shillings price, and that raw, at one meal ; another time he eat 13 dozen of pigeons. At Sir William Sedley's he eat as much as would have sufficed 30 men ; at the Lord Wotton's in Kent, he eat at one meal 84 rabbits, which number would have sufficed 168 men, allowing to each half a rabbit. He suddenly devoured 18 yards of black pudding, London measure, and having once eat 60 lbs. weight of cherries, he said, they were but wastemeat. He made an end of a whole hog at once, and after it swallowed three pecks of damsons ; this was

after breakfast, for he said he had eat one pottle of milk, one pottle of pottage, with bread, butter, and cheese, before. He eat in my presence, saith Taylor, the water poet, six penny wheaten loaves, three sixpenny veal pies, one pound of sweet butter, one good dish of thornback, and a silver of a peck household loaf, an inch thick, and all this within the space of an hour : the house yielded no more, so he went away unsatisfied. ....He spent all his estate to provide for his belly ; and though a landed man, and a true labourer, he died very poor in 1630."

And this is the third snag about good eating and drinking.

Nevertheless, expensive, troublesome, and unwholesome though it be, it is a pleasure by no means to be forgone.

—ROSE MACAULAY : *Personal Pleasures*.

## HINTS & NOTES



## HINTS

### FRANCIS BACON

(1561—1626)

The word "essay" was, as far as we know, first used by the Frenchman, Montaigne (1533—1592), from whom it was borrowed by Bacon. Montaigne's essays were a weighing of himself; the fullest and most unreserved piece of self-disclosure that man ever wrote. Bacon's essays, however, are in a class apart from that of Montaigne's. Bacon also is an analyst of human life, but he stands outside the work he fashions. "Essay," as Bacon understood the word, meant what we now understand by the word "Assay". It was an "assay", an analysis of some subject; the Latin *Exagium*, a trial of weight; an estimate of pros and cons.

### OF GREAT PLACE

**Attitude:**—A curious admixture of worldly wisdom and noble sentiments. The influence of Machiavelli. The assumption that men are prone rather to evil than good underlies the greater part of the reasoning. The essays are complementary to Bacon's philosophy. When he expanded a subject the method that came most natural to him was that of the scientist, by analysis and contrast. The choice of abstract subjects is in keeping with the analytic character of his mind.

**Style:**—The Attic style, which aims at idiomatic purity, not only in choice of words, but also in a simple and even severe correctness of construction. Bacon was a Latinist, (*cf.* the quotations with which he interlards his essays) and Latin is the one language, ancient or modern, that can say the most in the fewest words. Simplicity and homeliness of imagery; combination of wisdom in thought and brevity and picturesqueness in form, *Terseness*: try to paraphrase Bacon; you will find it impossible without expansion. *Wit*: aptness of illustration; richness of quotation.

#### Notes:

**Salomon**.—or Solomon was a very powerful and wealthy king of the Jews in the 10th century B. C. He is famous for his great wisdom.

**Tacitus**.—The Roman historian, who flourished in the 1st century A. D. He wrote a history of his own times.

**Galba**.—The Emperor of Rome (June A. D. 68 to January A. D. 69), after the death of Nero.

*Vespasian*,—Roman Emperor (A. D. 70—79). He was a man of mean origin, but was not ashamed of his birth. His simple and frugal life stood out in marked contrast with the luxury of his predecessors, and his example reformed the morals of Rome more than all the laws which were enacted for the purpose.

## OF DELAYS

### Outline :—

- (a) Sometimes by waiting, you get a lower price.
- (x) Again, you pay more dearly.
- (b) Failing to take occasion by the forelock, we can get no hold.
- (c) There is no greater wisdom than knowing when to begin.
- (d) Better meet dangers half way than watch too long.
- (y) But to shoot too soon is another extreme.
- (e) Success depends first upon secrecy in counsel.
- (z) Then upon quickness in execution.

**The method of the Baconian essay :—**Note that Bacon does not attempt to arrange his material, but weaves together his antitheses in pairs much as points are developed in a debate. There is rarely a formal introduction or a conclusion that summarizes. The shortness of most of the essays renders this unnecessary. Bacon himself calls his essays "pithy jottings, rather apt than curious."

### Notes :

*Sibylla*.—The Sibyl of Cumæ in Italy, the most celebrated of the wise women. She appeared before Tarquin the proud, and offered him nine books for sale. When he declined, she burnt three of them and asked the same price for the remaining six. On being again refused, she destroyed three more and offered the remaining three at the price she had asked for the nine. The king was now advised by his augur to buy the three books which were found to contain directions as to the worship of the gods and the policy of the Romans.

*Occasion*,.....no hold taken.—Spenser, *F. Q.* Book II, Canto IV, Stanza 4, describes *Occasion* as an old woman, lame of one leg. Her hair hangs down before her face, so that no one may know her, till she is past, at the back of her head she is bald, so that when once she is past, no one may grasp her from behind. She personifies the truth that an opportunity once missed never returns. Cf. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, IV, 3 :—

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune :

Omitted, all the voyage of their life.

Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

*Argus*.—Surnamed *Panoptes* (the all-seer), had one hundred eyes, some of which was always awake.

*Briareus*.—A giant with fifty heads and one hundred hands.  
(*cf.* Homer's *Iliad* I, 403.)

*The Helmet of Pluto*.—It was made by the Cyclops and had the peculiar property of rendering the wearer invisible.

JOHN EARLE

(1601 ?—1665)

The many character-sketches which adorn the pages of Lamb and Hazlitt owe their origin to the character-writers of the seventeenth century. The "character" has been defined as "a short account, usually in prose, of the properties, qualities, or peculiarities which serve to individualize a type." The vogue of character-writing in England in the seventeenth century is illustrated in the following writers :—

Joseph Hall, whose *Characters of Virtues and Vices* appeared in 1608 ; Sir Thomas Overbury, who advanced the art of character-writing through his collection of characters published in 1614 ; still further development of the form is to be found in John Earle's *Microcosmographic or Pieces of the world discovered in Essays and characters* (1628). Earle's character-portrayal has advanced towards the portrait of the individual who would at the same time be representative of the type. Such character drawing led to the creation of Sir Roger de Coverley (Addison and Steele), who, while individualized, also represents a distinct type, and is the forerunner of the portrait types in the novel as well as the essay.

**Style**.—Short, balanced sentences which lend conciseness to the character-sketch and emphasize its brevity. The opening sentence is frequently a definition, followed by a detailing of the characteristic traits. The ending is epigrammatic, or in the form of a conceit. The motive is didactic, the tone satirical.

#### A PRETENDER TO LEARNING

##### Notes :

*Seneca*.—(d. A.D. 65). The Stoic philosopher and a writer of rhetorical tragedies. His pithy and sententious remarks like those of the historian Tacitus were often quoted by the learned men of the seventeenth century, even as we quote Shakespeare now.

*Tavern wit*.—In the seventeenth century, taverns or inns were the favourite haunts of poets and of those who prided themselves upon their intelligence (*cf.* Keats' lines on the Mermaid Tavern). A witty remark heard at the tavern might be passed off by a pretender as his own. In the eighteenth century coffee-houses, and in the nineteenth the social clubs of London served the same purpose.

*Austin*.—Short form of St. Augustine, who was a great rhetorician and controversialist of the fourth century. His sermons were used throughout the Middle Ages.



*Scaliger*,—(1484—1558), a man of encyclopaedic knowledge; wrote polemical works against Erasmus, and treatises on Poetics and Botany in Latin.

*Casaubon*.—(1559—1604), a French Huguenot scholar and theologian. An extremely learned and critical student of the classics.

*Jesuits*.—Followers of Ignatius Loyola. Their society was bound by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Their object was to support the Roman Church against Protestants.

*Arminius*.—(d. 1609), a Dutch Protestant theologian, opposed to Calvin. His doctrines became very popular in the first half of the seventeenth century.

#### JOSEPH ADDISON (1672—1719)

Addison is the greatest master of the 'Periodical Essay.' Between the seventeenth century personal essay and the eighteenth century periodical essay there is a real distinction. The most distinguishing mark of the familiar or personal essay is its subjectivity. "It is not my acts that I write," said Montaigne, "it is I, it is my essence." The periodical essayist is not self-revealing in the manner of the familiar essayist. His aim is to report the news "foreign and domestic," to afford entertainment, and to bring about reform in morals, manners and tastes.

The aim and manner of the eighteenth century essay is revealed in the following passage by Addison:—

"Having thus taken my Resolutions to march on boldly in the cause of virtue and good sense, and to annoy their adversaries in whatever degree or rank of men they may be found: I shall be deaf for the future to all the Remonstrances that shall be made to me on this account. If *Punch* grows extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely: if the stage becomes a Nursery of Folly and Impertinence, I shall not be afraid to animadvert upon it. In short, if I meet with anything in city, court or county, that shocks Modesty or good Manners, I shall use my utmost endeavours to make an example of it."

Contrast this with the ideal of the essay as defined by A. C. Benson, in 'The Art of the Essayist':—

"The point of the essay is not the subject, for any subject will suffice, but the charm of personality. It must concern itself with something jolly. The writer must not be too interested in the action and conduct of life—he must be essentially tolerant. His charm depends upon giving the sense of a good-humoured, gracious and reasonable personality and establishing a sort of pleasant friendship with his reader."

To put it bluntly, the essayist, according to this view, should identify himself with his reader by flattering him. One cannot

help feeling that such an attitude cheapens the essay into a vehicle for trifling (though charming!) whimsicalities. As a shrewd reviewer in the *Scrutiny* observes:—

"Thus the essay's function has been completely reversed: Addison, Steele, Johnson, Goldsmith and others used the essay as a lay-pulpit to improve the reader's spiritual manners by disturbing his complacency: to-day it is a profitable channel for vulgarity, low-brow propaganda, and a studied irresponsibility."

#### THE EXERCISE OF THE FAN

**Attitude:**—We have here the record and the proof of Addison's patient serenity, his dignified independence, his good breeding, and his common-sense. He is essayist, moralist, philosopher and critic, blended together into a journalist. Not enthusiastic but judicious. Social attitude,—holds the mean between the bigots and the butterflies. The virtues that he praises are those that promote the well-being of society,—good sense and dignity, moderation and a sense of fitness.

**Style:**—The vocabulary is purely intellectual. His nouns are specific rather than sensory; the verbs denote thought rather than action. Even the adjectives are wanting in connotation, and are used in the main to insure an accurate understanding of the nouns which they qualify. Simplicity, lack of variety, clearness without force, and ease without strength—these are the chief characteristics of Addison's phrases. Contrast the colourless transparency of his phrases with the vividness of Hazlitt and the suggestiveness of Pater. Addison, like Dryden, is of historical importance by virtue of his changing the trend of prose from bombast and nonsense towards simplicity and intelligence. Note the following two features of his style:—

(a) Its irony—not the biting sarcastic irony of Swift, but a gentle, kindly irony—'penetrative irony' as it is called.

(b) Its humour—never purely malignant: always urbane, Addison would rather persuade than compel.

#### CHARLES LAMB

(1775—1834)

The Romantic movement in the 19th century led to a revival of rhythmical elaboration in prose. The taste for the picturesque encouraged the use of a gorgeous and highly coloured—and hence an intricately rhythmical style. The same movement against monotony, uniformity, convention, which was breaking up the tyranny of the heroic couplet in verse almost necessitated the return to flamboyant and poly-phonic prose. The imagery and figurative expressions and the rhythmic beauty of the language in many of Lamb's essays are more characteristic of poetry than of prose.

**Attitude:**—The influence of the 17th century. Cf. Lamb's delight in Robert Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor,

and other 'worthies' of the 17th century. His humour expresses itself in whimsies and quaint conceits, which on a superficial reading, seem closely akin to those of the 17th century writers. But on closer analysis, one detects a difference : Lamb's personal oddities and his mirth and melancholy are more romantic than metaphysical.

Lamb is a true cockney, wedded to his native London with no predilection for the beauties of Nature. "I must confess that I am not romance-bit about Nature." In Hazlitt the emphasis is upon beauty in scenery ; in Lamb upon the romantic aspects of city life.

Lamb's self-revelation is infused with wit, humour, charm, gusto and a deep understanding of life. In this he is both a realist and a romanticist. His realism consists in his ability to see himself as he really was, and he is romantic in his love of the past and in his desire to call forth in recollection the things which had given him pleasure.

**Style :—**Bold use of metaphor, balance and antithesis of sentence structure ; fanciful conceits and musical cadences. His figures of speech are original and unexpected, sometimes even far-fetched—*cf.* Sir Thomas Browne. However, Lamb has so thoroughly stamped his style with his own individuality that it is not to be referred to any one writer. Lamb has a fanciful way of pressing home his subject which lends charm and freshness to his observations. An artist above all, his aim was to please his readers and himself. He alternates reflection with anecdote ; humour with pathos ; eloquence with simplicity. He evokes moods, and keeps varying his tone according to a shifting and versatile consciousness. He chooses words with associative values and takes pleasure in making an elaborate sound-pattern (*cf.* the opening paragraph of *Poor Relations*).

His essays are the richest expression of his personality. His genius for reminiscence (*cf.* *Poor Relations*), and for sentimental memories (*cf.* *Dream Children*). Dramatic imagination : pictures built up by a loving accumulation of minute details ; talk upon trivial subjects raised to the level of fine art. His essays have been compared to musical tone poems.

#### DREAM CHILDREN

##### Notes :

*Children in the wood.*—The story of a little boy and a girl whom their rich father left, at his death, to the care of their uncle. To appropriate all the wealth which would have gone to them upon their majority, the wicked uncle hired two ruffians to murder the babes. On their way to the wood, however, one of the ruffians killed his fellow, and left children to wander about. The poor babes gathered black berries for their food, but they died during the night, and Robin Redbreasts covered their corpses with strawberry leaves. The uncle suffered terrible misfortunes, and expired in gaol.

*The Abbey*.—The Westminster Abbey in London where most of the illustrious Englishmen are buried after their death, and where the coronation of the English Kings also takes place.

*Caesars*.—Caesar was the name of a noble family of Rome, which Julius Caesar, the conqueror of Gaul and dictator raised to great prominence. This name was assumed by his adopted son Augustus, and in turn by several other succeeding Emperors. It persisted down to our own day in the variations of Kaiser and Tsar.

*Lelhe*.—A river in the lower world, whose water, if drunk, produced forgetfulness of the past.

*Bridget*.—The assumed name of Lamb's sister, Mary.

#### POOR RELATIONS

##### Notes :

*Agathocles' pot*.—Agathocles was brought up as a potter at Syracuse, but later on became king of that city, as well as of entire Sicily. He ruled for twenty-eight years. Agathocles' pot, therefore, stands for a reminder of previous poverty to a man now in flourishing circumstances.

*Mordecai*.—A Jew, foster-father of Esther whom Ahasuerus made his queen. When the chamberlains wanted to capture the king, he sat in the gate and frustrated their plan. 'A Mordecai in the gate' is a hindrance, something which thwarts your design.

*Lazarus*.—A poor beggar, mentioned in *St. Luke*. He was suffering from leprosy, and was daily laid at a rich man's gate. Hence, an object of repugnance at your door.

*L—s*.—The lambs.

*Richard Amlet*.—A knave and a gamester in Vanbrugh's comedy, *The Confederacy*. Richard (or 'Dick' as he is called familiarly) passes himself off as a colonel and is anxious to marry Corinna, by fair means or foul. He steals a necklace from his mother, Mrs. Amlet, with whom it has been pawned by his would-be mother-in-law. The fraud is exposed in the end, but Corinna is willing to accept Richard in spite of his shortcomings. Mrs. Amlet gives her roguish son £10,000 to start life. Lamb's references to Richard Amlet's "disadvantage" are, of course, ironic.

*Christ's*.—Christ's Hospital, a famous school in London for poor children. Lamb (*cf.* his essay *Christ's Hospital*). Coleridge and Leigh Hunt were educated here.

*Nessian venom*.—Nessus, a centaur, threatened to outrage the wife of Hercules, and was, therefore, killed by him with a poisoned arrow. To take revenge, the dying centaur bequeathed to her his shirt, stained with the infected blood, and told her that it could reclaim her husband from his unlawful amours. When Hercules was unfaithful to her, she sent him this garment which stuck to his flesh, and brought about his death.

*Lutimer*,—The famous sixteenth century theologian and preacher, was educated at Cambridge, but was sent to Oxford in 1554 to defend his views before the leading divines of the University. He was burnt as a heretic the following year.

*Hooker*,—(1554?—1600), the author of *Ecclesiastical Politic*. was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

*Gownsmen and Townsmen*,—Members of the University, and citizens. A distinction observed at Oxford even to-day, though, happily, without the old bitterness.

*High Street*,—The central street in Oxford, and one of the most beautiful in the whole world. Six important colleges and the University church are situated on it, and the "fine lanes" leading away into lovely corners take us to the other colleges.

*Artist Evangelist*,—A name for St. Luke, whom tradition mentions as a physician and a painter. He is now regarded as the patron saint of these crafts.

*Tower*,—Tower of London, a fortress-palace used as a prison for kings and queens and other important persons.

*Young Grotiuses*,—Budding jurists. Hugo Grotius (1583—1645), the Dutch lawyers, is famous as the father of International Law.

*Old Minster*,—Lincoln has a celebrated cathedral.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

(1778—1830)

One of the strongest influences upon the English familiar essay in the early nineteenth century was that of the Romantic Revival. In the essays of Hazlitt and Lamb may be traced romantic elements which parallel those found in the early nineteenth century poets. One of the characteristics of Romantic Poetry is the self-revelation of the individual through the expression of his emotions and feelings. In the early nineteenth century self-revelation received a fresh impetus in the work of the English familiar essayists. Hazlitt is the *link* between the romantic self-revelation of Rousseau and that of the nineteenth century.

Another characteristic of Romantic Poetry is an interest in nature, especially in the picturesque, and the assertion of a sympathetic tie between man and the physical world. The various aspects of this new love of Nature are present also in the prose of the period. Hazlitt's theories are in accord with Wordsworth's treatment of Nature,

#### ON THE LOVE OF THE COUNTRY

**Theme** :—The power of the most humble of Nature's objects to call forth the most tender sentiments and the most exalted feelings in man.

**Attitude** :—Wordsworthian union of imagination and reality. Contemplation, emotion, sensation constitute Hazlitt's real world. He is conscious of an animate spirit in Nature, harmonizing all her works. Zest for life ; bitterness with its antidote of Joy. Novelty, strangeness, contrast, originality, individuality, subjectivity, vulgar gusto or heartiness, the essays, of Hazlitt exhibit all these romantic characteristics.

**Style** :—Colourful vocabulary. He glories in the picturesque, terseness, fondness for contrast and quotation. A good proportion of concrete nouns and sensory adjectives. Compare Hazlitt's phrases with Addison's. Addison sought for clearness. Hazlitt will have nothing if not *force*. This force is brought about in two ways:—

- (a) By a telling choice of words.
- (b) By an original phrasal structure—parallelism and balance in the structure of sentences.

The style is marvellously responsive to the irresistible force of the author's personality. By this personality, critics, as readers in general, have been attracted or repelled, and accordingly have praised Hazlitt, or condemned him.

#### Notes :

*Rousseau* (1712—78), the French political philosopher, whose two most important works are *The Social Contract* which greatly prepared the way for the French Revolution, and his amazingly frank autobiography called *Confessions*.

*Dryad, Naiad*, according to the Greeks and the Romans, the former was a nymph of the trees, and the latter of lakes, rivers and fountains.

#### LEIGH HUNT

(1784—1859)

A contemporary of Hazlitt and Lamb. Hunt too achieved eminence as a writer of essays, though of a kind different from those of his friends. The rich variety of Lamb's character constitutes its unique charm ; the critical acumen of Hazlitt and his romantic approach to nature distinguish his miscellaneous work. It was left to Hunt to take up Addison's "periodical" essay, and to develop it according to the needs of an increasing public and a multiplying journalistic literature. His "articles" ministered to the popular taste, and while owing little to his forerunners. Hunt set a fashion whose modern counterpart is the "Third Leader" of the London *Times*, and whose practitioners among the writers of to-day include such names as E. V. Lucas, Hilaire, Belloc, G. K. Chesterton and Robert Lynd. A great miscellanist of English literature. Hunt was qualified for the task by his wit, a surprising amount of general study, a wide range of human interests, and the mastery over a facile and pleasing style. He

is essentially cultured.—that is why, unlike the moderns, we find in him no low-brow propaganda or studied irresponsibility. He is at his best when he is talking about his books (*cf.* the essay *My Books*), about London or about the charms of Nature.

**Attitude**.—A pleasant familiarity with the reader, good-humoured and gracious. A joyous exuberance, often amounting to paganism. A keen perception of the concrete and of the minutiae of Nature. Sentimental but sincere. Hunt is a lover of beauty, and is devoted to the spiritual values of life. Builds up an imaginative progression or regress upon an ordinary incident or thing. The charm of his personality is brought out in the succession of moods in the essay. Intimate personal asides.

**Style**.—Natural and easy, conversational and playful. The treatment of trifles with an assumed seriousness produces humour. Rich in poetic references. An impassioned verve, unfortunately not sustained for long produces unequal work. His essays suffer from the condition of their production.

**Notes :**

**Our room**.—The editor's office. Leigh Hunt uses the first person plural because his essays were generally contributed as editorials to the various periodicals such as *The Examiner*, *The Reflector*, *The Indicator*, etc. with which he was connected.

**Mr. Bentham**.—Jeremy (1748—1832), political and moral philosopher, noted for his doctrine of utility, by which he judged the goodness of all laws and institutions. Bentham was well known to Hunt who is here poking fun at the former's doctrine of pleasure and pain.

**Papilio**.—Latinized name for a butterfly.

**Mr. Pepys**.—Samuel (1633—1703), whose *Diary*, discovered in 1825, is a most entertaining and human document besides being unrivalled for its picturesque accounts of life in the city and court during the early years of Charles II's reign.

**Ajax of the Diptera**.—That giant of a fly. Diptera is an order of flies; Ajax was, after Achilles, the bravest of the Greeks who besieged Troy.

**Years have**, etc.—A line from Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode*, Leigh Hunt has adapted it to his purpose; the actual quotation is, "in years that bring the philosophic mind."

**Musca**.—Latin name for fly.

**Evelyn**.—John (1620—1706), chiefly remembered for his *Diary* in which he describes his continental travels, and gives excellent portraits of his contemporaries. *Sylva* (1664) contained his views on practical arboriculture, and exerted great influence in its time.

**Banks**.—Used in a double sense. 1. Banks where money and valuables are deposited. 2. Mounds, where flowers grow.

**Milton**.—The reference is to passage in *II Penseroso*.

**Malaria**.—Literally translated, *mal + aria* means bad air.

*Pope*,—Alexander (1688—1744), a great satirist; author of *Dunciad*, and of *Moral Essays*. The extract has been taken from his *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*. Drury Lane in London was noted for its theatre.

*Three-half-penny meditations*,—The reference is to the price of the newspaper in which Hunt's essays were published.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY  
(1800—1859)

**Theme** :—*Macaulay's Conception of History*. The opinions of historians on the nature of history are like the opinions of men generally on life. In both cases the opinions reflect the infinite variety and confusion of the subject-matter. But roughly speaking there are two schools of thought. There are those who think that history can be, and is, a science; and those who think that history cannot be, and is not, a science. Macaulay belongs to the second category.

If history cannot be written as a science, is there any other way it can be written? Macaulay's answer is that it can be written as *narrative* and as *drama*. As such, history will have affinities with literature. Macaulay is the culminating point in the literary tradition of English History.

**Attitude** :—Democratic; Macaulay expands the scope of history. He believes not merely in describing the so-called heroic actions of the past, but also the ordinary, the familiar, the commonplace.

Macaulay is a belated Augustan; his mental life had its origin in the eighteenth century. Positively, it meant that thought never became a disease in his robust life. Negatively, it circumscribed his outlook; a too great certainty of temper leading to a limitation of intellectual outlook. Great as was his knowledge, great also was his ignorance. His mind was hermetically sealed; there was no sense of the 'absolute' in him. Lack of analytical power; in the literature of the most profound idealism Macaulay had little interest. His zest for life and literature is wrapped up in externals.

**Style** :—He writes in the best rhetorical style. Macaulay has few equals in the art of arrangement—that is to say, in the way subject leads on to subject and paragraph to paragraph. The style travels from climax to climax without a pause. His copious vocabulary, his abundance, which keeps the reader 'on the go' the whole time. Variety of sentence-structure. And the strangest thing of all is that he manages to be concise while preserving his volubility!

**Notes** :

*Bane of French drama*.—Macaulay is referring to the three classical unities of time, place and action which were observed by the dramatists of France. While undoubtedly restricting the scope of the play, they did not always prove a bane. Cf. Racine's *Phedre* and Corneille's *Le Cid*.



*Lord Clarendon*,—(1609–1674). Lord Chancellor and Chief Minister to Charles II from 1658. He is noted for his *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* which was published in 1702–4, although the text became available as late as 1888. Selections from his correspondence, extremely important as historical material, were published in 1767–86.

The persons and events mentioned by Macaulay in this paragraph belong to the era of the Long Parliament (1640–1653), and the succeeding years. Macaulay suggests that instead of narrating the bare facts of his period in minute detail, Clarendon should have used the novelist's art to make his characters alive.

*Bishop Watson*,—Richard Watson (1737–1816), was created Bishop of Llandaff in 1782. In reply to Gibbon, he wrote his famous "Apology for Christianity" in 1776. He was professor of Chemistry, and then of Divinity at Cambridge.

*Regent Street*,—The most beautiful and aristocratic street of London.

*Puritans....Nigel*,—Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), wrote a number of successful historical novels dealing with English life in the 16th and 17th centuries.

*Old Mortality*, (published 1816) deals with the struggles of the Puritans in the reign of James II to secure toleration for their religious opinions. Scott makes his characters speak the language of the times. *Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) introduces James I as a pedantic freak, from whom Nigel demands 40,000 marks advanced to the king by Nigel's father. The king signs an order on the Scottish treasury for the necessary amount but complications ensue; Nigel is imprisoned in the Tower, his release being secured by Margaret who has fallen in love with him and who, disguised as a page, interviews the king. In the historical works of Clarendon and Hume, colourful accounts of such happenings are necessarily left out. Macaulay made his history lively as a romantic tale.

*Froissart*,—(1337?–1410), a French chronicler whose *Chroniques* cover the period 1325–1400, and if untrustworthy as history, nevertheless give a faithful picture of the broad features of life in Flanders, France, Spain, Portugal and England are informed with the spirit of chivalry.

*Chaucer....Tabard*,—Chaucer's (1340?–1400) masterpiece, *Canterbury Tales*, gives the account of a pilgrimage from the Tabard Inn in London to the Shrine of Thomas a Becket in Canterbury. Including the poet himself, there are thirty-one persons in this company, representing nearly all the contemporary walks of life. A very fair sample of society in the 14th century.

*Villain*,—Used in the original sense of a feudal serf.

*Kenilworth*,—A novel by Scott (1821). It gives admirable portraits of Elizabeth and of the Earl of Leicester.

*Thucydides*,—The great Greek Historian (b. 471 B. C.) whose account of the Peloponnesian War is remarkably concise at times but is noted for its strict truthfulness.

*Fifth Monarchy-Men*.—They have been defined as “a sect of English fanatics in the days of the Puritans, who maintained that Jesus Christ was about to come a second time to the earth and establish the Fifth Universal Monarchy. The four preceding Monarchies were the Assyrian, the Persian, the Macedonian and the Roman. In politics the Fifth Monarchy-Men were arrant Radicals and levellers.”

#### JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN

**Theme** :—Newman's conception of a Catholic seat of higher learning may be summed up thus :—

1. He distinguishes between an Academy and a University. The former is made up of eminent scholars, each a specialist in his subject, busied in investigating, discovering, framing theories for the advancement of learning ; the latter consists of two classes of persons, the teachers and the taught, and its characteristic function is not to conduct novel experiments but to train the minds of the young, a purpose to which every member of the faculty should sacrifice his labours.

2. A university should teach all branches of knowledge, including theology.

3. The gathering into one place and under one government of the various faculties tends to the advantage of all by causing each study to round out and correct the others and thus unify and harmonize knowledge.

4. To this end the utmost possible freedom of investigation and discussion should be encouraged.

5. The discipline of the students should be such as to fit them to play their parts in the world.

6. They should be trained to use their minds, not merely to repeat worn-out arguments and employ formulae.

#### Characteristics of style :

1. The first and the least important is Irony. The ruthless energy of his biting and brilliant satire is incomparable in its effect.

2. The second characteristic quality of Newman's style is its psychological realism, by which we mean two things : (a) an understanding of the motives of others, and (b) the gift of describing the different manifestations of the life of the mind.

3. The third feature of his style is supersensuous realism, by which we mean his gift of expressing the invisible, and of making it sensible, present, palpable, and penetrating.

4. The fourth feature of his style is its pathos.

5. And finally, the Attic simplicity, grace and precision of his style. Newman is a master of skilful undertones, and short pauses. He chooses the most simple words in the language.

**Notes:**

*Foregoing discourse*.—Previous lecture. This extract has been taken from a series of lectures delivered by Newman to the Catholic University of Dublin, and published under the title, *The Idea of a University Defined*.—that is why the word "gentleman" is used here several times as a form of address.

*Aristotle...Goethe*.—Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher, who took entire knowledge to be his province; St. Thomas Aquinas, perhaps the profoundest intellect of the Middle Ages; Newton, the seventeenth-century English scientist who formulated the laws of gravitation; and Goethe, the greatest poet and man of letters, Germany has produced.

*Pompey's pillar*.—In Alexandria: a Corinthian pillar of red granite, nearly 100 feet high, erected by Publius, the prefect of Egypt, to commemorate Diocletian's conquest of Alexandria in 296 B. C. It is a misnomer to call it by this name.

*Peripatetic and Stoic*.—The first refers to Aristotle's system of philosophy, the second to the school of philosophy founded by Zeno.

*Acheron*.—A river of the lower world supposed to be the river of woe.

*Salmasius*.—(1588—1653), a great classical scholar, professor of Leyden University in 1649. At the instance of Charles II, he wrote Latin pamphlets defending Charles I and condemning the government of the regicides. Milton was asked by the Council to prepare the replies.

*Tarpeia*.—Daughter of the governor of the citadel at Rome, who was tempted by the offer of gold of the Sabine bracelets and collars to admit the Sabines and their king Tatius within the gates. As they entered, they threw upon her not only their bracelets but their shields as well, with the result that she was crushed to death.

*University of Oxford*.—Though, unfortunately, there are examinations now, the University of Oxford does not insist upon attendance in lectures, residence in college is regarded as the surest way of eliciting the best that is in a man.

*Genius loci*.—The peculiar atmosphere of a place.

### RALPH WALDO EMERSON

(1803—1882)

A prophet in his own country for nearly fifty years. Emerson may be regarded as the American counterpart of Carlyle. In his essays and lectures he preaches the supremacy of spirit and the divinity of man. A philosophic idealist and mystic who believed in an over-soul. Not much originality in his thought, but it seems fresh because of his handling.

**Attitude**.—Intuitionistic. His essays record his impressions and flashes of inspiration. A want of logic and connected order.

Judgments based on emotion, not reason. Their charm is due to his geniality and warmth. Inspires confidence. A cheery optimism pervades his work. He has the merit of combining lofty thoughts with practical common-sense. Extremely sensitive to the claims of the spirit in human affairs.

**Tone** :—Oracular. His essays are a collection of gnomic wisdom. The impression they give is not so much of a man as of a disembodied voice. Persistent eloquence becomes tiring. The organ note is now out-moded. Yet if oracular a little too frequently, it must be said that Emerson's subject-matter lends itself easily to such a treatment.

**Style** :—Aphoristic and terse. A profusion of epigrams. Emerson sums up experience in pithy sayings; his similes are poetic and vivid. His sentences balanced and slow moving. Sometimes concise to the point of obscurity. Unconvincing when he tries to make an epigram out of a far-fetched idea. Ponderous and heavy at places. Compare him with Bacon.

**Notes :**

*Furies*,—In Greek mythology the three goddesses of revenge who inflicted famines and pestilence, caused pricks of conscience to the guilty, and carried out the courses pronounced on criminals.

*Timons*,—Timon of Athens became a hater of mankind, when after squandering his wealth on friends and parasites he found that in his hour of difficulty nobody came forward to help him.

**MATTHEW ARNOLD**  
(1822—1888)

The nineteenth century essay was framed on the large scale. The biographical studies of Macaulay, the socio-economic criticisms of Ruskin and Carlyle, the literary and cultural writings of Matthew Arnold were all on an elaborate pattern. The articles in the serious periodicals were also of the same kind. The material prosperity of the Victorian age and the smug complacency to which it gave birth roused to bitter scorn the sensitive spirits of the age. A classicist and a European by virtue of his wide culture. Matthew Arnold was no lover of the English ways, and he castigated his countrymen with the artist's superior disdain. He was devoted to ideas, and therefore did not value affections through which the Englishmen worked. He erected standards by which he judged conduct and theories, and condemned them if they were found wanting. *Sweetness and Light* is a good sample of his method and style.

**Theme** :—(1) Proceeding to answer those who ridicule culture without understanding its significance, Matthew Arnold defines it as a study of perfection. It is inspired not merely by a scientific passion, but also by the desire to do moral good. Beginning with reasoned knowledge, it always ends in action.

(2) Its aim being identical with that of religion, it is, nevertheless, wider in scope because it draws upon all the voices of human experience, including art, science, poetry, philosophy and history.

(3) Cultural perfection is impossible to realize in isolation ; it, therefore, aims at social improvement.

(4) Culture demands a harmonious expansion of all powers, and is specially needed in the mechanical and external civilization of to-day, in particular in England, where all its elements are specially thwarted.

(5) The English faith in machines, the exaggerated belief in the far-reaching consequences of freedom of speech, the pride in the nation's material prosperity or growing population have all to be countered by culture which declares that spiritual values are far more important than the material.

(6) Culture, in brief, gives us sweetness and light, and is akin to poetry, though poetry itself hasn't yet had the religious influence it deserves.

(7) The English confuse relative with absolute perfection and therefore rest on their laurels.

(8) Cultured persons often fail in morals and yet their ideal remains true ; religious persons often succeed, and yet their ideals are inadequate. Religion should be judged by what it produces, but if so, the bitterness of religious criticism would not be to its credit. Muscular Christianity can never be regarded as complete ideal.

(9) Oxford is a glorious disseminator of culture ; it wins even where it is apparently defeated ; its values permeate slowly but surely.

(10) Democracy is now replacing middle-class liberalism, but its ideal needs to be corrected by culture which disbelieves in systems. It imparts sweetness and light even to hatred and to violent passions.

(11) Culture does not work by going down ; it rather lifts up, and brings about a classless democracy. It humanizes knowledge and spreads it to high and low indifferently.

**Attitude :—**Mocking scorn against easily satisfied empirical ambitions. Calm and self-possessed. Arnold employs personal formulae in passing moral judgments. He stands for spiritual values and an equanimity of temper. Urges the nation to know its own soul. A complex and highly educated sensibility fretting against an unintellectual *milieu*. Slightly priggish at places, prejudiced and narrow at others. Keen desire to bring beauty, precision, and a cultural uniformity in life. He becomes extremely enthusiastic while talking about objects dear to his heart. A high moral fervour pervades his essays.

**Style :—**Limpid clarity and a slow measured cadence distinguish his prose. An easy eloquence throughout, with magnificent rhetoric occasionally. Masterly use of a cool, biting irony and of smashing sarcasm. Frequent repetition of phrases in the

interests of lucidity, but often for stylistic effect. Choice of exact epithets, absence of digressions, absolute correctness of form. Pure and predominantly Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. Classical quotations. The essential rhythm of prose at its best.

**Notes :**

*M. Sainte Beuve*,—(1804–69), celebrated French critic and poet, who did much to popularize the romantic movement in France. “Monday Talks” (*Gauseries du Lundi*) is a famous collection of his weekly articles in the periodicals, Matthew Arnold quoted him quite frequently in his essays.

*Montesquieu*,—(1689–1775), French political philosopher, whose *The Spirit of Laws* contained a searching analysis of various kinds of political institutions.

*Mr. Bright and Mr. Frederic Harrison*,—John Bright (1811–89), liberal statesman of England, and a great orator. He held various posts under Gladstone’s government. Had no regular education. He was a representative of the manufacturing class in English politics. Frederic Harrison (1831–1923), essayist and professor of jurisprudence. He was a follower of Auguste Comte, and did much to propagate his positivist doctrines.

*Jeremiah*,—One of the greatest of Hebrew prophets, who was, however, persecuted because of his unwelcome insistence on the soul. This was considered pessimistic and unpatriotic in a prosperous Jewish nation.

*Mr. Roebuck*,—John Arthur (1801–72), English politician in sympathy with the extreme Liberals. He was an original member of the Reform Club, and wanted to curtail the power of the House of Lords.

*Philistines*,—Originally the name of a warlike people who occupied the southern sea-coast of Palestine, and in the early times kept fighting against the Israelites. Arnold popularized the word as applicable to those who were opposed to culture and enlightenment. In this sense it is derived from the German *philister*, meaning a townsman, one who does not belong to a university. Barbarians, Philistines and the Populace were Arnold’s designations for the upper, the middle and the lower classes respectively.

*Epistle to Timothy*,—Forms part of the *New Testament*. Timothy was a companion of St. Paul, and the Epistle is supposed to have been written by a person who agreed with Paul’s teachings, and who expanded fragments of his letters into a long admonition.

*Franklin*,—Benjamin (1706–90), American statesman, scientist and journalist, to whom Arnold refers again at the end of the essay. In politics he took his stand on reason and humanity rather than on high principles. Wrote an interesting *Autobiography*.

*Epictetus*,—Stoic philosopher of the first century A. D. who taught at Rome. His thoughts were collected by his disciple Arrian. Epictetus praised endurance and abstinence as the greatest virtues.

*Swift, Battle of Books*,—Jonathan Swift (1667—1745), the greatest satirist, and one of the finest writers of prose in English literature. The atrabilious Swift certainly had no sweetness in him. *The Battle of Books* is a satire on the controversy between the merits of Ancient and Modern Literature.

*Independents*,—Congregationalists or Non-Conformists; persons who believe in each church and congregation managing its own affairs.

*Pilgrim Fathers*,—Those English Puritans who left England in 1620 and founded a colony in America, which later led to the acquisition of a whole continent.

*Virgil*,—(70—19 B.C.), author of the epic poem *Aeneid*, and of shorter pastorals. One of the greatest poets in Latin.

*Establishment*,—The national church of England.

*Epsom*,—The name of a famous racecourse in England over which the most important race of the year, the Derby, is run.

*Professor Huxley*,—Thomas Henry (1825—95), the Victorian scientist and thinker who did more than anybody else after Bacon, to popularize science in England.

*Sallust*,—The Roman historian (86—34 B. C.) Cato was a Roman nobleman having an unblemished character in an age of profligacy. He committed suicide when Julius Caesar came to power, and Cato's opposition proved unavailing.

*Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh*,—Victorian politicians, advocates of freedom of speech and belief.

*Dr. Newman's Apology*,—The autobiography of Cardinal Newman, in which are given the reasons for Newman's conversion to Catholicism. One of the noblest books in English prose.

*Mr. Lowe*,—Robert Lowe, first Viscount Sherbrooke (1811—92), an English statesman, a brilliant and epigrammatic speaker, and good debator. Chancellor of the Exchequer under Gladstone (1868—73).

*Jacobinism*,—Extreme doctrines of reform. The Jacobin Club of Paris (1789) stood for absolute equality of rights, and a thorough-going democracy.

*Comte*,—(1798—1857), French philosopher, who gave to sociological ethics and the welfare of humanity, the importance which was usually given to metaphysics and revealed religion. His best English disciple was Frederic Harrison.

*Tarquins*,—The fifth and the seventh kings of Rome belonged to the family of Tarquinius.

*Sabine*.—The Sabines were an ancient people of Italy who lived near Rome, and later on migrated to it.

*Book of Job*.—One of the most moving chapters in the *Old Testament*. Job, a prosperous and innocent man is suddenly overwhelmed by calamities. The book discusses the connection between suffering and sin.

*Bentham*.—See note included under *Windows*.

*Xenophon*.—The Greek historian, who continued the work of Thucydides.

*Mr. Buckle*.—Henry Thomas (1821—1862), the author of *History of Civilization* which had great contemporary reputation. Buckle had considerable literary power and a wide knowledge, but he was not accurate.

*Mr. Mill*.—John Stuart (1806—73), the English philosopher of utilitarianism.

*Rabbi*.—A Jewish teacher of law and ritual; hence a pontiff, a spiritual leader.

*Abelard*.—Peter (1097—1142); French scholastic philosopher and theologian. He was much persecuted for his views. His school of divinity in Paris was immensely popular and had 5,000 pupils.

*Lessing and Herder*.—Lessing (1729—81), the greatest critic in Europe of his time (see his *Laocoon*), was the leader of Enlightenment in Germany, and freed German drama from the restraints of the French classical school. Herder (1744—1803), of the same spirit as Lessing, was also a leader of the German Romantic Revival.

*St. Augustine*.—(345—430), a teacher of rhetoric and bishop of Hippo; had immense popularity in the Middle Ages. His *Confessions* contains vivid descriptions of his conversion.

#### SAMUEL BUTLER (1835—1902)

**Attitude**.—Severely empirical. Sceptical about his subject his ability, his conclusions. A candidate for truth, he proceeds cautiously, examining, and then accepting or rejecting the doubts which arise during his search. Upsets prejudices by oblique attacks. Knows the limits of reason; accepts facts but asserts the mystery of life which can be understood only in the idealistic way. The obscure triumph of the spirit cannot be explained on mechanical considerations. A precocious anticipation of psycho-analysis. Ridicules traditional values, and enthusiastically proclaims his own headstrong theories. A great zest and animation in his essays. Rational deductions added on to mystical intuitions. Emphasizes the value of instincts. We achieve immortality in the memory which we leave behind, and in the unending fruitfulness of our works and actions.



**Style** :—Attic simplicity, directest and extremely clear expression of ideas. Produces an impression of great honesty. Quiet and implicit humour. The language is frank and precise, devoid of emotion, but suited for persuasive analysis. Frequent use of epigram, and an adaptation of homely sayings. Not eloquent but critical; the slow, elaborate rhythm is suited for philosophical speculation, concrete imagery and biting irony.

**Notes :**

*Handel*,—(1685—1759), a German musician, and writer of operas. He was appointed court-composer in England in 1727, and produced a number of operas at the English theatres. Butler thinks very highly of him.

*That divine woman*.—Butler's pet theory that *Odyssey* was written not by Homer but by a woman. Cf. his book. *The Authoress of the Odyssey*.

*Jane Austen*.—(1775—1817), the inimitable English novelist of the eighteenth century domestic life.

*Doge Loredano Loredani*.—The reference is to Bellini's famous picture of this old Italian magistrate. Bellini (1422—1512) freed art from the dry Gothic manner. He painted the interiors of numerous churches in Venice and elsewhere.

*Che cosa e amor?*—What is love?

*Rembrandt's old woman*.—The portrait of an old lady by the greatest of Dutch painters, Rembrandt (1607—69), included in the National Gallery, London. It is generally regarded as the finest portrait in the world.

*Edison*.—Thomas Alva (1847—1931), the inventor of the phonograph, the original of the modern gramophone. Butler is referring to his 'kinetoscopic' camera which took moving pictures—the prototype of the modern 'movie' camera.

*Titiens, Trebelli, Jenni Lind*.—Obviously well-known singers of Butler's age.

*Lohengrin*.—A famous opera by Richard Wagner (1850), about the son of Percival.

*Virgils and Alexander Popes*.—For the former see note included under *Sweetness and Light*, for the latter a note under *Windows*.

*Rembrandt, Bellini*.—See notes above.

*Lord Beaconsfield*.—Benjamin Disraeli (1804—81), Victoria's Prime Minister from 1874 to 1880, and prolific novelist, dealing with political and social themes.

*Letters of Junius*.—A series of letters which appeared from 1769 to 1771, in a paper called the *Public Advertiser*, attacking with bitter irony several important political personalities of the age. Written under the assumed name of 'Junius,' the real authorship of these letters remains unknown.

*Man in the Iron Mask*.—Another mystery. A man in a mask of black velvet was kept a state prisoner by Louis XIV for 24 years. Various guesses have been made, but the identity of the person has never been established.

*Great namesake*.—Samuel Butler (1612–80) author of *Hudibras*, a satire on Puritans.

### STEPHEN LEACOCK

(1869– )

Here is an example of modern humour. Leacock is an eminent professor of political economy in Canada, but is known all the world over by his humorous writings. Occupies a unique position because he combines the English with the American variety of humour. Subtle and concise, there are few follies and pretences of modern life which he has not held up to ridicule. Inimitable as a writer of parodies. With growing years, he is becoming serious even in his lighter work, and mixes up fun, as in this extract, with constructive criticism.

**Attitude** :—Genial iconoclasm. Pricks up social and literary pretensions. Stands for the simple and solid values of life. Impatient of humbug and flippancy. Delivers ironical hits at follies while seeming to accept them at their current value. The sick hurry and commercialism of American life have invaded even the academic sphere and Leacock emphasizes the importance of the so-called unproductive studies. Compare with Newman his idea that learned professors are well worth their apparent irresponsibility; it is they and not big buildings which attract students. Ridicules the American cult of big business and incessant activity. Dislikes sport as an end in itself.

**Style** :—Short and pithy sentences; colloquial vocabulary, conversational tone. Absence of learned allusions. In short, all the qualities needed in 'light reading' are here. Humour created both by understatement and exaggeration. Generally there is a 'surprise' at the end of a sober paragraph. Digressions consisting of irresistibly funny anecdotes. Effective use of pun and paradox. Humorous comparisons.

#### Notes :

*Hire and fire*.—In most American business-houses, there are two departments called hire and fire, the one for engaging new employees, and the other for dismissing them.

*Evangeline*.—The heroine of Longfellow's poem of that name.

*Machiavelli*.—(1469–1527), a Florentine statesman and politician, whose *Prince*, a treatise on statecraft, had a great vogue in the seventeenth century. Machiavelli advocated the use of cruelty and bad faith to gain political ends.

*Wall Street*.—The financial centre of New York where the banks and the Stock Exchange are situated.

*Sphinx*.—According to the Greeks, a monster, half-animal, half-woman, who lived near Thebes, and proposed enigmas to its inhabitants who were devoured if they could not return satisfactory replies. It was Oedipus who answered her riddle upon which she killed herself.

*Medicine man*.—A pun. In primitive societies a medicine man is a magician, a witch-doctor, who undergoes a long training before acquiring this position of power.

*Waterloo*.—This saying expresses a typical English belief in the far-reaching significance of sports. Leacock's remarks about the stupid extent to which the cult of sport is carried in some colleges, unfortunately apply to the Indian conditions as well.

BERTRAND RUSSELL  
(1872— )

*Theme*.—(1) It is difficult to appraise one's own civilization, but a definition would clarify the issue.

(2) Civilization is a manner of life due to the combination of knowledge and forethought. So long as it rested upon agriculture, civilization was the same the world over; the distinctive Western trait begins with the Greeks who invented Geometry and the habit of deductive reasoning.

(3) The conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity introduced a loyalty to religion even greater than the loyalty to the State.

(4) This civilization lasted through the Middle Ages, which, among other things, have bequeathed to us representative government.

(5) Extraordinary progress, such as Europe has made during the modern age, always remains mysterious in its origin, but may be regarded as due to the achievements of great individuals like Kepler, Galileo and Newton, more than to any other cause.

(6) Political solidarity, and nationalism (so effectively copied by the Japanese) further distinguish Western civilization.

(7) Social cohesion has been brought about by changes in the art of war and by scientific inventions. Science has liberated kindness, but it hasn't yet replaced the traditional and individualistic by a larger social morality.

(8) Patriotism may give rise to a sense of pride in communal achievements, and it is possible to visualize a future in which great artistic and intellectual works are produced by co-operation even as they are in the world of science to-day. It is easy to develop a communal and industrial mentality by education among nations which are largely uneducated.

(9) However, along with abstract intellect and energy, fierce intolerance, born out of democratic envy or misguided religious zeal has always distinguished the warlike and

pugnacious people of Europe from the urbane and peace-loving nations of Asia. The intolerances we see in Europe to-day all have a long history and are true to type.

**Attitude**,—Rational and detached. A pragmatic and realistic approach to problems. Distrustful of systems where the human material is concerned. Russell admits the possibility of differing estimates, but supports his own with a wealth of illustration drawn from all the arts and sciences,—particularly from history. His mathematical training has taught him the virtue of precision. Establishes points securely before proceeding further. Clear statement of object, and the use of definitions. The conclusion comes like the final proof of a theorem. Utter absence of prejudices. A hero-worship of intellectuals. His deep regard for the human personality makes him dislike and disbelieve in methods of regimentation. Acutely analytical.

**Style**:—The most important trait is lucidity. No confusion, no blurring of outlines. Absence of all superfluous ornament sinewy. Learning easily borne and cogently organized. Effective and picturesque comparisons. Masterly use of irony and satire. A quiet humour introduced at the most unexpected places gives a shock of delighted surprise. The gift of clear exposition is joined with an ability to make succinct summaries. His style is persuasive, and he conveys to us the thrill of his own intellectual excitement. A natural run of sentences, whose length and impact, however, keep varying. A sustained and quiet rhythm.

## WESTERN CIVILIZATION

### Notes :

**Marco Polo**.—(1254—1324), an Italian traveller, who went on a papal embassy to the Khan of Tartary and chose the land-route for his journey. He came back home after twenty four years, and published an interesting account of his travels.

**Rousseauites**,—Persons who following Rousseau's philosophy believe that there was an idyllic state of nature before society came into existence, and to whom, therefore, a savage is naturally an uncontaminated gentleman.

**Sir James Frazer**,—(b. 1854), the greatest of all living anthropologists. His most important publications are *The Golden Bough*, 12 vols. and *Totemism and Exogamy*, 4 vols.

**Genesis**.—The first book of the *Old Testament*, describing the history of the world, from the beginning of creation. The incident referred to is about the migration of the tribes of Israel from Canaan to Egypt on account of a famine. Their leader Joseph obtained from the Pharaoh (or king) of Egypt permission for them to stay in a part of the country called Goshen where their adherence to pastoral life earned them from cultured Egyptians the name of barbarians.

**M. Huc**.—(1813—60). a French Roman Catholic missionary to China, who spent about eight years in that country, and

published a well-known record of his travels when he came back to France.

*Cain and Abel*.—Cain, the first child of Adam and Eve, killed his brother Abel, because the latter's sacrifice was accepted while his was not. Abel was a shepherd.

*Praetorian guards*.—Bodyguards of the Roman Emperors.

*Constantine*.—The Great (306—337), Roman Emperor who became Christian, and changed the Capital of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium which he renamed after himself as Constantinople.

*Kepler, Galileo, Newton*.—Russell speaks very highly of the work of these men elsewhere as well. Kepler (1571—1630), a German astronomer, formulated three laws of planetary motion; Galileo (1564—1642), Italian astronomer and physicist, inventor of the telescope, discoverer of planets, repudiator of the Copernican system, martyr to science; Newton (1642—1727), the English mathematician and philosopher, who enunciated the law of gravitation.

*Byzantine immobility*.—The Byzantine Empire, an offspring of the Roman, merely carried on the old traditions for nearly a thousand years, and created little that was new.

*The Shogun*.—The title of the military rulers of Japan from the 12th century to 1868. They assumed all the powers of the Emperor. The title passed on hereditarily in certain families.

*The Shinto*.—The native religious system of Japan according to which the Emperor is the descendant of the sun-god, and therefore deserves implicit obedience.

*Peter the Great*.—(1672—1725), Czar of Russia, a great traveller, who Europeanized his backward country.

*Hammurabi*.—Ruler of Babylonia in 2370 B. C. He threw off the foreign yoke, and added territories to his country. A patron of literature, he also got prepared a code of laws.

*Lenin*.—(1870—1924), the most brilliant disciple of Karl Marx, the leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917, perhaps the acutest intellect of this age.

*Socrates*.—(469—399 B.C.) a great Greek philosopher, who was put to death (by poisoning) by the Athenians for the so-called impiety of his opinions. He left no written work: his philosophical doctrines are inextricably mixed with those of his disciple Plato in whose *Dialogues* they find expression.

*Confucians, Taoists*.—Confucius (550—478 B. C.), a Chinese teacher of moral and political science, whose sayings have been greatly responsible for moulding the Chinese character. He founded no specific religion but during the Han Dynasty (B.C. 206 to A.D. 220) a system bearing his name was evolved. Under it, the Emperor and his officials were supposed to be divinely appointed and ancestor-worship was enjoined upon the

people. Taoism was sounded by the great Chinese philosopher Lao-tze, who was a contemporary of Confucius. Taoism lays stress on simple, unselfish actions as the foundation of happiness. Its teachings are kindly and humane; in later centuries the system was made polytheistic and complicated.

*Syracuse*,.....*Archimedes*.—Syracuse, the wealthiest and most populous city of Sicily, was besieged by the Roman Consul, Marcellus in 214 B. C. The siege lasted for two years during which the mathematician Archimedes (287—212 B. C.) helped his fellow-citizens by constructing various engines of destruction, among them lenses by which the ships of Marcellus were set on fire. When the city fell, Archimedes was killed by mistake, although a reward was offered to the man who captured him alive.

*Aristides*.—An Athenian statesman and general, surnamed the 'Just' was sent into exile by his fellow-citizens because they were jealous of his reputation. He fought both at Marathon and Salamis and died a pauper.

*Heraclitus of Ephesus*.—The 'weeping philosopher,' who maintained that all things were in a state of flux, and took their origin from fire. The idea of permanence, he said was an illusion.

*Sparta*.—A city, and a city-state of Greece, noted for its rigid discipline and the inculcation and military virtues. The Spartans allowed only the healthiest offspring to survive, and did not care for either culture or commerce. They had a class of rulers, a class of dispossessed subjects, and a class of slaves in their state. Not unlike Modern Germany in these respects!

*Pizarro*.—(1478—1541) the Spanish conqueror of Peru. The Incas were the rulers of the country until Atahualpa was put to death in 1532.

*Pope Pius IX*.—(1846—1878), a liberal in the beginning, he ended as a reactionary.

#### LYTTON STRACHEY

(1880—1932)

The modern biographical essay is essentially different from its sprawling and sentimental Victorian counterpart. Uncritical hero-worship is scrupulously avoided. There is no attempt at exhaustive narration; a few significant episodes are chosen, and the subject is attacked at unexpected places. "A sudden revealing searchlight" is shot into recesses which had remained dark and unexplored before. The matter-of-fact and disillusioned twentieth century views with ironical disrespect, the prim confidence, and trickling sentimentality of the Victorian age. Great men are discovered as having all the faults of common humanity; the idols have feet of clay. Heroes of a past generation emerge after such treatment with a diminished stature ("debunked," as the succinct American phrase puts it), but the portrait is credible

and therefore satisfying. Strachey was the most important writer of this school. His *Eminent Victorians and Queen Victoria*, perfect in their kind, set a fashion which has been taken up by Mr. Philip Guedella and a number of other biographers.

**Attitude:**—Cynical and unsentimental; there is a classical rationality in evaluation; absence of enthusiasm; desire to discover the hand of chance in the ordering of life, statement of essentials, the bare bones of narrative. The subtle use of hints enables him to open out historical and imaginative vistas while retaining a concentrated vigour. Devastating irony. Artistic finesse, French in quality. Dramatic arrangement of episodes. Tolerant yet sceptical acceptance of past greatness. The final impression is that the details have passed through an imaginative acid which has combined them into a new harmony, but has left a taste. Strachey's short biographical essays are models of significant compression.

**Style:**—Crisp, lucid and highly finished; reminiscent of Dryden in his satirical portraits. Strachey's method of approach was poetic; he delighted in complicated rhythms, and the stress was always placed upon the right word. Change of attitude from sentence to sentence; a master of paragraph construction who manages his transitions admirably. A frequent use of the dash, rhetorical questions, and clichés mar the effect sometimes, but on the whole, the richly sonorous prose gives a thrill of delighted surprise as Strachey, like a skilful anatomist, dissects his subject with practised precision.

**Notes:**—

*Bernard of Clairvaux.*—St. Bernard (1091—1153), the dictator of Christendom in his time. He founded the Abbey of Clairvaux, and preached the second crusade. He is one of the four 'Latin Fathers.'

*Erasmus.*—(1466—1536), the great Dutch humanist, and a leader of the Renaissance. He translated the *New Testament* in Latin, and by his vigorous attacks on the abuses of the Church prepared the way for the Reformation.

*Complexion of Anne Boleyn.*—Which made Henry VIII fall in love with her, and therefore brought about the separation of the English from the Roman Church, and led to the supremacy of the crown.

*A storm in the Channel.*—Which scattered the Spanish Armada, otherwise intended for a mighty attack on England.

*A young man in Glasgow.*—James Watt (1736—1819), the discoverer of the steam engine (1769), which led to the growth of the factory system as we know it to-day. Watt worked as a mathematical instrument-maker so Glasgow University.

*Les Oreilles, etc.. The Ears of Lord Chesterfield*—The name of a book.

*Les chaises percées.*—The commode.

*The Bastille*.—The state prison of Paris which was destroyed in the French Revolution.

*Coups de baton*.—The knock-out blows, the beatings.

*Madam du Chatelet*.—(1706–1749), a beautiful and clever woman famous because of her intimacy with Voltaire. Voltaire went to live with her at the Chateau of Cirey in 1735; the lady's bad temper led to frequent quarrels, and the separation came about in 1747, Voltaire wrote a treatise on the Newtonian system in collaboration with her.

*Reclame*.—Self-advertisement.

*The Berlin episode*.—In 1750, Frederick II of Prussia urged Voltaire to come to Potsdam and appointed him as a court chamberlain. He was entertained magnificently but a disparity between the tempers of the philosopher and his royal pupil led to the former's departure from Germany in 1753.

*Ecraser l'infame*.—To crush the infamous one. This was Voltaire's famous cry, in which he referred not so much to the suppression of God, Christ or Christianity, as to the persecutions of orthodoxy.

*That gigantic correspondence*.—Voltaire was one of the most voluminous letter-writers of all time. About 12,000 of his letters addressed to nearly 700 correspondents are in existence, and are an invaluable source of information for eighteenth century.

## ALDOUS HUXLEY

(1894—)

**Attitude**.—Reaction against Victorianism. Inductive, suspicious of facile generalisations. Among the modernists Huxley stands out as the most erudite, cultured and scientific writer. The individual bent of his mind is more analytical than synthetic. Mental alertness, universal curiosity; the analytical method demands rigorous self-discipline. Huxley recognises the gap between the real and the ideal, and his inability to be satisfied (he is too honest for that) with any of the fashionable methods of bridging the gap accounts for his wavering between melancholy and irony. Huxley loves to destroy a dream with mocking anti-climax. Awareness of human frustration.

**Style**.—Superficially observed, the style appears intellectual and detached. The author steps aside and observes himself—contemplates his own feelings. We notice the apparent heartlessness, the cold, objective commentary, the distrust of emotion. And yet this aloofness is not inhuman. At the root of the author's heartlessness is distressed love. Brilliant originality of metaphors. Uses repetition like Matthew Arnold to drive a point home.

**Tone**.—Aristocratic; a faint note of *snobism* so often assumed by intellectuals. With Huxley, however, it is not mere affectation; it has rather the quality of a reformer's impatience.



## WORDS AND BEHAVIOUR

## Notes :

*Dr. Jekyll*.—The physician in Stevenson's novel of that name, who is conscious of his dual personality, and calls his evil self as Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jekyll strives after perfection, but finds Mr. Hyde too much for him.

*Marengo*.—in Italy. In 1800, Napoleon secured a victory over the Austrians here.

*Reckenkamp*....*von Schubert*.—Two typical and amusing names. The former was a Russian, the latter a German General during the Great War of 1914—1918.

*T. H. Green*.—(1836—82), the most important follower of Hegel in England. His philosophy is stated in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

*Prof. Whitehead*.—A. N. (b. 1861), Professor of Philosophy at Harvard and author of many important philosophical works from which Huxley quotes frequently. Whitehead describes religion as what one does with one's solitariness.

*Hegel*.—(1770—1831), the Great German idealistic philosopher, who is noted for the use of a dialectic method (taken over and elaborated by Karl Marx) in his speculations, and for regarding the State as endowed with a super personality. In this sense he can be regarded as the father of fascism.

*The young lady*.....*bonnet*.—The three young ladies are symbolic representations of England, Germany and France respectively.

*Dulce*.....*mori*.—It is sweet and proper to die for one's country.

*The evil passions*, etc.—The wisdom of these last two paragraphs cannot be too highly appreciated at a time when Nazi catch-phrases have deadened German sensibility, and have plunged the world into the horrors of a new war. Fascism feeds its adherents with broad and elemental hatreds, and the combined machine of terrorism and official propaganda stifles the critical faculty of the nation.

## ROSE MACAULAY

In our own time, the short, personal essay has almost rivalled the short story in popularity. Both remain products of a hurried life when reading has to be done in snatches. Necessarily, therefore, there is an absence of serious thought and constructive criticism. Out to amuse the greatest number of readers, the essay adopts the lowest common denominator of culture, and purveys satisfying half truths to the low-brow mentality. Personal whimsies, unaccountable and exotic tastes, sentimental attitudinizing, a perception of infinity in a particle, and of nothing more than particles in infinity, a *reductio ad absurdum* of the traditional and established values, exploitation of cheap humour, and an ostentatious virtuosity are some of the traits of

this species. A glance at the usual subjects tells the whole story,—*On Something, On Nothing, On Not Smoking Cigarettes, On Lying in Bed, On Not Getting out of It*. Nobody can deny the pleasantness and the entertainment quality of the modern essay, but it has little else besides. The great practitioners of this form are G. K. Chesterton, E. V. Lucas, Hilaire Belloc, Y. Y., E. V. Knox and A. G. Gardiner.

Rose Macaulay stands half within and half without the fold. Uniquely personal in tone, she fills her essays with antiquarian lore, and literary allusions, which make them attractive even to the serious student. Besides, she has a definite sense of style and her intimate familiarity with seventeenth-century literature (in which she has placed the scenes of some of her successful novels), affects her writing and imparts to it a characteristic flavour.

**Attitude:**—Intimate and confiding, an enthusiastic disclosure of personal preferences. Richly sensuous descriptions epicurean taste. Fastidious but hearty. A string of reflections; on a common place theme, which we are asked not to regard as commonplace. Scholarship has been pressed into service to lend dignity to the subject.

**Style:**—Literary; at places metaphysical. Influence of Newman (*cf.* the elaborately cadenced sentence), Lamb, and the seventeenth-century prose-writers. Echoes of famous lines and phrases. Humour is introduced by way of forgotten anecdotes. Subtle irony; at places a suspicion of rhetoric. Long sentences are alternated with short, and the result is pleasing.

#### Notes:

*Gower's Amans*, The reference is to Gower's (1330?—1408) chief English poem. *Confessio Amantis* in which the poet represents himself as a lover, weary of life. Venus asks him to confess all his sins to Genius, her priest, who suggests remedies for the seven deadly sins (of which, of course, one is Gluttony), and illustrates his points by telling stories.

*Satiate, etc.*,—From Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, II, 792—6.

*As with, etc.*,—*Ibid*, II, 1008—12.

*Timaeus*,—A philosophical dialogue by Plato, dealing with the composition of the world, and of the human body and soul.

*Glutton in Piers Plowman*,—*Piers Plowman* is a long allegory written in Middle English, and attributed to William Langland. It describes a vision of earth full of people belonging to different professions, in which throug also appear the personifications of the seven deadly sins, including Gluttony. This poem is important because it gives us glimpses of the labour problem of the day.

*Mr. H. W. Fowler*.—The author of *Modern English Usage*, a book whose grammatical punctiliousness inspires terror in the hearts of many writers.

*Lucullus*,—(born about 110 B.C.). Roman Consul for eight years; having amassed wealth in his expeditions, he lived a life of great luxury and spent enormous sums over single dinners. He was the first to introduce cherries in Italy.

*Lady in Comus*.—*Comus*, a masque by Milton, contains a character called The Lady, a personification of Chastity and Puritanic abstinence. Comus, the evil spirit, asks her to partake of a feast which she refuses to do, in the lines quoted by Rose Macaulay (II. 704-5).

*Dominica*—The largest of the Leeward Islands in the West Indies.

*Antonio de Herrera*,—(1549—1625), was appointed by Philip II as the historiographer of the Indies and of Castile. His chronicle was translated into English in 1740. Note Rose Macaulay's fondness for out-of-the-way studies.

*Sylvestre*,—Joshua, translated (1605) into English Du Bartas's French epic *La Semaine* dealing with the creation of the world. The extract has been taken from the translation.

*Heliogabalus*—or Elagabalus, was Roman Emperor, 218-222 A. D. He assumed the name of the Syro-Phoenician sun-god of whom in childhood he was made the priest. He became Emperor at the age of thirteen by the intrigues of his grandmother who proclaimed that he was the son of Caracalla. His reign was notorious for its profligacy and vice.

*Taylor, the water-poet*,—John Taylor (1580—1653), a Thames waterman who showed a marked talent for rhyming. He provided fun for both the court and the city and was patronized by Ben Johnson.

